

Complete

THE CONFESSIONAL LUTHERAN

Published In The Interest Of Ecumenical Lutheranism

MOTTO: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."--1 Cor. 1, 10.

BOARD OF EDITORS: Rev. Paul H. Burgdorf, Rev. J. Buenger, Rev. G. Schweickert, Rev. C. M. Gullerud;
Rev. Arthur E. Beck, Managing Editor, Foley, Minnesota

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NO MIRACLE

"God has performed a miracle; the testimony of our representatives has not been in vain; our former opponents have been convinced of the truth of our doctrine."

Utterances such as these were heard on the floor of the St. Louis Convention in 1938, and they convinced many for the time being that they should accept the A.L.C. Declaration as satisfactory.

But our opponents have never said that they have changed their position. Nor could they truthfully say so. On the contrary, they have urgently requested our Missouri Synod Union Committee to abstain from such language as would declare the doctrinal position of the Missouri Synod to have proven superior to that of the American Lutheran Church, and rightly so. For, to any one familiar with the original Iowan position and occasional changes in their mode of expressing their ideas, it is evident that during the whole union movement, since the year 1920 up to this day, Iowan "theology" has scored one success after another.

One will never see this if one starts out with the erroneous assumption that the expressions "doctrine," "theology," "open questions," and others have exactly the same meaning in the phraseology of the A.L.C. that they have in ours. If this were the case, then indeed, a certain change in the doctrinal position of the A.L.C. could not be denied. But things look entirely different when we take all expressions used by the A.L.C. in the sense in which this Church itself takes them.

From the very beginning Iowans have declared that their synod refuse to identify itself with any theological school, and that the tenets of the various theological schools should never be considered divisive of church-fellowship. What do they mean by "theological schools"? They use this expression in the sense of theologians of the 19th century, who defined theology as a science in the ordinary sense of the word, a science which is occupied with questions beyond Scripture doctrines that have been accepted by the (Lutheran) Church.

From this resulted the Iowan open question theory, according to which all doctrinal differences which in the past were controversial between Missouri and Iowa were merely considered as so many results of different "theological" thinking, which should never disturb the unity of the Church.

After dropping their original definition of open questions as points of doctrine which the Church has not yet decided in her Confessions, this term was defined by them as standing for "non-divisive differences", which definition is also essentially faulty and has become the cause of many misunderstandings. But this open question theory enabled the Iowa Synod to lay the blame for division at the door of the Missouri Synod, which denied Iowa church-fellowship in spite of essential doctrinal unity, merely on account of "theological" differences, according to its contention.

Realizing that even their modified definition of the term "open questions" was inad-

quate, Iowans repeatedly declared that they were ready to drop the expression if only they remained free to retain their underlying principle, viz., a distinction between doctrines of faith in which unity is necessary and other doctrines which can not be thus regarded and concerning which differing opinions must therefore be granted equal rights within the Church. Still, not only this principle, but also the expression "open questions" remained in use long after 1867, also on the part of Iowans. Aside from many other instances which might be cited, Dr. Deindorfer as late as 1904 still used the term "open questions" in an article of the **Kirchliche Zeitschrift**, setting forth differences between Missouri and Iowa. (Cp. **L. u. W.**, 1904, p. 440.) The assertion that Iowa dropped its open question theory in 1867 is, therefore, historically incorrect.*

Nor does the fact that the term "open questions" is seldom used at present mean that the false principle underlying it on the part of Iowa and the A. L. C. has been abandoned. For the same doctrinal differences which in former days were called open questions, those regarding the Church and the Ministerial Office, the doctrine of Sunday, Antichrist, Conversion of the Jews, and a resurrection of the martyrs before the Last Day, are now termed "non-divisive" differences in non-fundamental doctrines, or in terminology, respectively.

As long as Ohioans and Iowans harbored synergistic ideas concerning conversion and predestination and accused the Synodical Conference of Calvinistic teaching, they declared this difference to be divisive of church-fellowship. But after they changed their mode of teaching, dropping all synergistic expressions and retaining only the assumption of a dissimilar conduct in man, this change materially affected their attitude toward the Synodical Conference. For both parties now **agree** in the statement that the salvation of man is exclusively, and without any cooperation of man, a work of divine grace alone, while perdition is entirely the fault of man. Thus far goes the "doctrine."

But the two parties still **disagree** as to the conduct of natural man over against divine grace. While the Synodical Conference stresses the **equal** evil conduct of those who are saved and those who are lost, the A. L. C., by distinguishing between natural and wilful resistance, still teaches a **dissimilar** conduct. But this deep-rooted doctrinal difference is not considered by them as a difference in doctrine, but one of **terminology** only!

This peculiar phraseology explains all official and unofficial utterances of A. L. C. men since 1938. It explains why the A. L. C. men declared themselves "conscious of being in agreement with" the **doctrine** of conversion and election as contained in the Brief Statement and then later declared that this does not include certain exegetical portions, nor the terminology, employed in our synodical confession. It explains Dr. Reu's two lectures "In the Interest of Lutheran Unity" (L. B. C., 1940), in which, in spite of his apparent assent to our doctrinal position, the old Iowan attitude of the author is plainly to be discerned. God willing, these two lectures will, by the way, be more thoroughly examined in a later issue of the **Confessional Lutheran**.

No; no miracle has occurred. The A. L. C. Declaration, and later A. L. C. statements as well, are in full harmony with the old doctrinal position of the former Iowa Synod and the present American Lutheran Church. Everything that has been said is very natural—too natural to leave room for any thought of the miraculous.

J. B.

● Inter-Synodical Conference at Cedar Rapids, Iowa

(Mo. Syn.—A.L.C.)

An inter-synodical conference was held at Cedar Rapids, Iowa, on November 7, between pastors of the Missouri Synod and of the American Lutheran Church. Thirty three pastors participated in the gathering. As compared with previous conferences, this represented a dwindling number, particularly on the part of A.L.C. men, of whom there were just six present.

The conference was opened with joint prayer. We protested against this practice before the close of the conference. In reply we were told that the conference had previously discussed this matter and that it had come to the decision to open with prayer. According to the secretary,* who openly offered this statement on the floor of the conference, this practice was considered vindicated by the argument: Surely, if we can pray together even with those who are much further removed from us than what we are apart from each other, we can also pray together.** Subsequently we learned that some of the Missourians who were absent had remained away

* A member of the A.L.C.

**Clearly a reference to the unionistic position championed by Dr. Reu in the official A.L.C. publication "In the Interest of Lutheran Unity." (L.B.C., 1940.)

* cp. also Lutheran Witness, Aug. 6, 1940, p. 275.

in protest against this practice, their previous oral and written protests (also of one group as a conference) having proved in vain.

A paper on the Sunday Question was read by a pastor of the American Lutheran Church. He stated:

What is taught in the Lutheran Symbols has always been taught within the Missouri Synod and within the Iowa Synod which has now become a part of the American Lutheran Church . . . The purpose of inter-synodical conferences such as the present one is not to discuss that wherein we agree, but rather that wherein we differ . . . There is a difference between the Missouri Synod and the A.L.C. as respects the Sunday Question . . . Wherein does this difference lie? . . . In this: that a difference such as existed between Luther and Gerhard is not to be considered divisive of church-fellowship . . . Such a difference does not lie in the province of doctrines of faith, but in that of Open Questions . . . The Iowan position is not a departure from the Lutheran Confessions. . . It does not belong in the province of Confessional doctrine . . . We must tolerate the departure of which reference has been made . . . As soon as we do what Missouri does, we become guilty of dragging into the question of doctrines of faith, the question of their "further theological development." . . . Grosse, in polemizing against Iowa's position of the Sunday Question in his **Unterscheidungslehren**, went too far . . . Statements of Iowa Synod periodicals, from 1866 on (which were read), are correct.

The essayist had formulated seven theses, embodying the position for which he contended, the last of which was particularly meant to bring out the difference between Missouri and the A.L.C.***

We called attention to the fact that there are current, within the A.L.C., publications containing doctrinally false statements regarding the Sunday question which go even beyond what the essayist asserted to be the **status quo**. Without having the exact references at hand at the time, we made mention of a draft of a new catechism to be published within the A.L.C., in which the following is found under the Third Commandment: "Question 38. What do you conclude from this Commandment? That God wants us to set

aside one day in seven for the nourishment of spiritual life." We referred to statements contained in Golladay's sermon outline on "Jesus' Interpretation of Sabbath Observance" in his current **Thomasius Gospels** (Published for the author by the Lutheran Book Concern)—statements such as the following: "Jesus agrees with the intent of the Sabbath of the dawn of things, and with the Sinaitic Law, that there is a day to be observed . . . In the thunder tones of Sinai, spoken directly to the sons of men, God says, pointedly, emphatically: Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy . . . This law, so far as the observance of a day is concerned, has never been revoked." We referred to the **Lutheran Standard**, which in its issue of Aug. 10, 1935, contains this statement: "Though Christians are not bound to keep any particular day of the week for rest and public worship, yet God demands that on one of the seven days of the week they rest from unnecessary work and hold divine worship." (Cp. Theo. Hansen, **The Historical Open Questions Among American Lutherans**, p. 39ff.)

A Missourian pastor, Rev. J. Bertram, read a paper on evangelical lodge practice. One of the things brought out during the discussion of this essay was the fact that Christ has redeemed us from all sin, also from the dominion of sin. No one needs to remain in the sin of fellowship with the Christless and idolatrous lodge. For Christ gives us the power to break also with this sin. A plea was made for a full Gospel, which evangelically shows the impossibility of accepting the Christ of the Scriptures and of God and yet remaining in fellowship with lodgism. Considerable further testimony along these lines was offered by Missourians present. It was incidentally pointed out that lodge-ridden churches are themselves beginning to complain that their work is being undermined by the lodge element which they reckon among their membership.

In concluding this report we again call attention to the fact that those of us who have been insisting that such differences as unquestionably exist between Missourians and the A.L.C.—for instance the difference regarding the Sunday question and other questions which the A.L.C. wishes to have regarded as open, non-divisive questions—be honestly faced with a view toward their proper removal, have been baselessly defamed in our own circles, in official and unofficial publications (**Lutheran Witness** and **American Lutheran**) as loveless, suspicious, and not quite sensible souls, whose lack of sanity and charity is hardly to be endured. Let it be said here that we shall never write a line against such

***We subsequently asked the essayist to let us have his essay or a copy of it for a few days, so that we might examine it more closely. This request was declined with the courteous explanation that the essayist was "sorry to say that he does not like to give any essay of his into other hands unless he himself be present to give account of his writings."

charges so far as their reflection upon our persons is concerned. We are, with our Lord and a multitude of faithful witnesses to His Name, willing to be called much worse things than we have already been called for the sake of His Name and of the truth which we confess, and to rejoice therein. Let it also be said however, that we shall never cease to protest against the abuse of truth that goes with such charges, and the mistaken assumption upon which they rest, namely, the assumption that doctrinal differences which heretofore separated the Missouri Synod on the one hand and the A.L.C. and its constituent synods on the other hand had ceased to exist by 1938—the mistaken major premise on which the untenable and unacceptable union resolutions of 1938 were based.

We have taken the A.L.C. Declaration for just what it is. We find in it neither more nor less light than what is offered therein. Regarding the question of Sunday, the Declaration, wishing to emphasize what alone is important to the A.L.C. in this respect, sheds no more light on the situation which confronts us and which we must face than that it says: "That which is contained on this point in the Brief Statement of the Missouri Synod is **publica doctrina** among us." We do not doubt that fact. We never did. Nor do we doubt that such a **publica doctrina** has always existed even within the old Iowa Synod, from its very beginning. But we insist that the Declaration does not say that alongside of this doctrine another **publica doctrina** is not tolerated within its midst. Much less does it reject the false **publica doctrina** which has always existed within its midst and which still exists there. We rather know that the A.L.C. contends for the toleration of the false teaching regarding the Sunday question which has been discussed in this report. Contention for the toleration of divergent doctrines is unionism. The A.L.C. believes in unionism. We do not. The matter is as simple as that. A.L.C. men honestly tell us what their Declaration means. It only remains for us honestly to face the facts. Whether it is the proper and brotherly thing for advocates of union on the basis of the untenable St. Louis Resolutions of 1938 to cast suspicion and to heap ridicule upon brethren who ask that we thus honestly face facts, that is a matter which they themselves may judge. We plead with such brethren in all earnestness to examine our arguments and the evidence which we offer more thoroughly than this has been done heretofore. And we ask more than that. We ask—and this is all-important to us—that our union resolu-

tions of 1938 be rescinded. It is more and more obvious that they were a dreadful mistake.

P. H. B.

• "Tenders Of Fraternity"

The **Lutheran Standard**, the official publication of the American Lutheran Church, in reporting on that Church's "Undaunted Convention" in Detroit, October 11-17, 1940, had this to say with regard to the greetings brought by leading men from various Lutheran bodies:

"The greetings brought to us by Doctors Burgess and Arndt were **tenders of fraternity** that touched hearts and formed the basis for unfeigned thanksgiving to the God and Father of us all." (**Lutheran Standard**, Nov. 9, 1940, P .3.) (Emphasis ours.)

When the Nov. 16th issue of the **Lutheran Standard** appeared, bringing the word-for-word messages of the men mentioned above, we were amazed at the lack of Lutheran confessionalism and the bold unionistic spirit in other camps which manifested itself at Detroit.

But before quoting pertinent statements from the several messages, it must be stated in fairness to our Dr. Arndt, that the **Lutheran Standard** misrepresented his presence at the Convention. It refers to Dr. Arndt as an "official visitor from the **Missouri Synod.**" He himself, however, rightly states in the opening paragraph of his message: "Doctors Engelders and Karl Kretzmann, and I come to you as representatives of the **Missouri Committee on Lutheran Union.**" (Emphasis Ours.)

We now quote from the messages to which we have referred.

1. Greetings From The ULCA

The first "**tender of fraternity**" from which we shall quote was offered by Doctor E. Burgess, representative of the United Lutheran Church and president of the National Lutheran Council.

Dr. Burgess states:

"... It is with a trembling heart that I bring you a tender of fraternity such as only brothers of a common faith can give... And it is in harmony with the eternal fitness of things that a visitor from the American Lutheran Church should be found on our convention floor at Omaha at the selfsame hour when a visitor from the United Lutheran Church stands here... My position here recalls a similar experience... thirty-two years ago, when the wars of the General Synod were raging... Most of the pastors would have been glad to see the war end; but at the same time many still 'carried a gun' when General Synod men were around..."

When any man tells you it is dangerous for the American Lutheran Church to cultivate the friendship of the Missouri Synod, or of the United Lutheran Church in America, you can tell him that it would be more dangerous not to do so. The welfare of the Lutheran Church throughout the world at the present moment depends in a large degree upon the cooperation of all American Synods. How can we cooperate, and still uphold our separatistic policies? * What Answer can we give to our children for the failure of a divided church to guard their spiritual heritage? . . . Our common prayers are far in advance of our halting fellowship. The Common Service Book, which we gave you, may represent nothing more than our scholarship; but these common prayers, rising from thousands of family altars, reflect our common faith. Let there be no strife between your pastors and our pastors, I pray you: for we are brethren. And may the day soon come, when all our people shall sing their songs of harvest home together, never to be divided again in earth and heaven."

2. Greetings From the American Lutheran Conference

The second **"tender of fraternity"** was extended to the **"Undaunted Convention"** by Dr. E. Ryden, recently reelected president of the American Lutheran Conference. Again we transcribe only the most essential portions:

" . . . For nearly a century in America these children were content to walk apart, each seeking to solve his own problems and to work out his own destiny. Sometimes they were suspicious of one another, at times perhaps a bit envious, at all times somewhat critical. But finally they began to look with interest at one another, to find something good in each other, and even to feel a sense of need for one another. That is how the American Lutheran Conference was born ten years ago. . . . I believe that we can truly say that we who are constituent parts of the American Lutheran Conference have come to **understand each other better**. . . . We have also, I believe, come to understand that the Conference has made one of the most **significant advances in the direction of Lutheran Unity** . . . I was deeply impressed at the last meeting of the Conference executive committee, when your own Dr. Reu said solemnly: 'Brethren, I pray to God that we may not permit anything that happens on the other side of the Ocean to disturb the fraternal relationship which exists between us' ** and I would add that I pray to God that nothing that may happen here in America may in any way destroy the Lutheran unity which we have already achieved in the Conference. Finally, I would say that it is generally recognized that we as a Conference **occupy the**

most strategic position *** of any body in the Lutheran Church in America with reference to the whole problem of Lutheran Church unity. We are neither the most conservative body, nor the most liberal. We stand, as it were, in the center, ready to stretch forth the hand of fellowship to the right and to the left. In this task your own Church, as a constituent part of the Conference, has already rendered a distinct service through your negotiations with the Missouri Synod and the United Lutheran Church. The thing which happened last Friday in Omaha, when the United Lutheran Church ratified the Pittsburgh agreement, was a real achievement for the American Lutheran Church and a genuine victory for its leadership. We rejoice over the things you have accomplished and believe that you have charted the course which we as a Conference must follow: to fellowship with us, and to work with those of our Lutheran household of faith who are willing to work with us. Thus only shall we be able to fulfill our destiny as a Lutheran Church in America, and thus only shall we be able to carry out our God-given task."

3. Greetings From The Missouri Synod Committee on Lutheran Union

We regret to see that the third and last **"tender of fraternity"**, which the **Lutheran Standard** presents is that of our own beloved Doctor Arndt. He was introduced to the Detroit Convention by Dr. Reu "as one whom Dr. Reu had learned to 'love as a brother'." and whose presence Dr. Reu considered "an event in the history of the Lutheran Church of our country." Dr. Arndt's message in its entirety reads as follows:

"My colleagues, Doctors Engelder and Karl Kretzmann, and I come to you as representatives of the Missouri Synod Committee on Lutheran Union, and we bring to you the cordial greetings and best wishes of this committee.

"Whoever has studied the history of the Lutheran Church in America will be reminded by our visit of the years from 1872 to 1881 when the Ohio Synod, now a part of the American Lutheran Church, and the Missouri Synod marched shoulder to shoulder in the Synodical Conference and jointly built the Lutheran Zion in this country.

"Will those great days return? Will not only the former Ohio Synod but the former Iowa and the former Buffalo Synod as well, both now likewise component parts of the American Lutheran Church, be brought into fellowship with the Missouri Synod and our sister Synods in the Synodical Conference? That is our fervent prayer, and our being here is a token of the sincerity of these our sentiments.

"It is our conviction that there are still obstacles hindering the immediate establishment of

* The Confessional Lutheran has previously pointed out that unionism and separatism are not so far apart, and that it is not necessary for us to choose between these two evils in the present situation, as some in our midst mistakenly seem to imagine. Unionism simply consists in the uniting of separatistic, schismatic, and sectarian factions. True unity is based upon the removal of such factions.—P. H. B.

** If we can rely on press reports, Dr. Reu reiterated this statement on the floor of the recent Conference convention held in Minneapolis, Nov. 13-15. Mpls. Star-Journal, Nov. 15, 1940.

*** It is on account of this strategic position that at the Mpls. Convention of the A. L. Conf. "A general conference of all Lutheran bodies in America to consider the broad problems of Lutheran Unity, as well as the problems of co-operative aid to missions 'orphaned' by the war was called. This action came after the report of the conference's Lutheran unity commission, presented by Dr. Reu of Dubuque, Iowa, had been discussed at great length and adopted." (Mpls. Star-Journal, Nov. 15, 1940.)

church-fellowship between our bodies. Owing to the kind invitation of your committee that we draw up a formal statement setting forth what in our opinion still hinders the establishment of church-fellowship between our bodies, we have submitted such a statement. It is not necessary that I dwell on its contents now. Your president has made it available for all of you in mimeographed form. We should like to ask you to give the points we mention your prayerful consideration.

"Some of the obstacles which we enumerate are of such a nature that they cannot be disposed of in a hurry but that considerable time and patience are required in adjusting them. We should like to plead with you not to let this delay perturb you, just as we tell our own people not to lose courage and become impatient because of the apparent slowness of progress. What is important is, not that we quickly present a united front, but that we become thoroughly one and united in our doctrinal convictions and in the assurance that we are brethren and belong together, so that the ultimate declaration of fellowship is merely the announcement of a situation which has already come to be a fact.

"Unity of doctrine, unity of conviction, unity of faith—we hold that this is a treasure which no church body can prize too highly. When we held our meetings with your honorable committee and discussed one Scripture doctrine after the other, and when it became apparent that on all of the main doctrines of God's Word we were in full agreement, all of us were deeply moved, our hearts were filled with gratitude to God, and we saw in it an evidence that our heavenly Lord has not yet forsaken His Church, but still grants His Holy Spirit. And when in 1938 our church bodies declared that in the respective documents there had been achieved a doctrinal basis for future church-fellowship, what expressions of joy were there not heard on all sides! Praise God from whom all blessings flow—that is what hearts felt and lips spoke. Can their work remain unfinished—God forbid! Let us, God helping us, move forward to the consummation.

Since our committees form but a very small section of our church bodies and therefore most of our pastors could not be present at the discussions, the intersynodical conferences of pastors of our two bodies which have been held, and are being held throughout the length and breadth of the United States are of extreme importance. May the numbers of such meetings increase! When Ohio, Missouri, and other Synods in 1872 formed the Synodical Conference, the factor which drew these bodies together was the conviction that in the teachings of the Lutheran Church we have not speculation but the unadulterated truths of God's Word; that when Luther inaugurated the Reformation he not merely ushered in a new age, but through God's grace gave back to the Church the pure Gospel of Jesus Christ, assigned the Cross to its proper place at the center, and in general adhered to the teachings which have been proclaimed with great power for all ages by the inspired prophets and apostles. These doctrinal treasures—of that the fathers were sure—are preserved for us and set forth in the Lutheran Confessions. Because our fathers had these Confessions and had found

in them the pure teachings of Holy Scripture they considered themselves very rich. The conviction of the Scripturalness of Lutheran teaching filled them with holy enthusiasm.

"Have those convictions changed since 1872? Have they been proved false? Perish the thought! We reply, 'The Word of the Lord endureth forever.' To all of us Luther is still the great Reformer of the Church, and the teachings brought before us in the Lutheran Confessions are still the hope of sinning, suffering, despairing war-torn humanity. To the spreading of these truths your church body and ours have dedicated themselves. What a great thing it would be if we could jointly carry forward the flag of genuine Lutheranism, and in a day of doctrinal indifference and skepticism encourage each other to remain strong, loyal, and uncompromising in the confession of the old saving truth!

"Let us not think that the task of preaching this truth is hopeless. It is true that the divine character of the Holy Scriptures, their inerrancy or infallibility, is violently attacked, and that church body which places itself solely on the Scriptures is said to have for its basis an outmoded, crumbling, collapsing foundation. Likewise the bold proclamation that in the Lutheran Confessions there is enshrined in its purity the gold of Scripture doctrine is regarded as a manifesting narrowness of outlook which is strangely out of harmony with the spirit of the modern age. Against all such talk and criticism let us definitely say:

The Word they still shall let remain
And not a thank have for it,
He's by our side upon the plain
With His good gifts and Spirit.

"The Word won the victories of the Church in the past; it will win them today. May this conviction help to bring us, the sons of Luther, together in a God-pleasing fellowship. O Lord Jesus, so I say, and I know you say, O Lord Jesus, grant it for the sake of Thy divine love!"

A. E. B.

☛ The "Lutheran Standard" Reports on the Recent A. L. Conference Convention at Minneapolis.

Without comment we again bring our readers excerpts from the official periodical of the ALC on the recent convention held by the A. L. Conference. We shall let the reader judge for himself whether this is confessional Lutheranism or the kind of "church-political tripe," of which **The Lutheran Witness** of Nov. 26 speaks.

"We would say that all through the Convention of the American Lutheran Conference at Minneapolis, Minn., on November 13-15 the accent was on **REALISM** . . . President Ryden reviewed the ten years of our history as a Conference . . . By the guidance of the Spirit of God, they enunciated the principles by which these five groups agreed to cooperate in Christian understanding and fellowship. The experiences of the past decade have proved that the foundations were wisely laid, and even though

human mistakes and weaknesses may have often thwarted the divine will, we believe that God is using, and will continue to use, the American Lutheran Conference as a means to realize His plans and purposes with reference to the Lutheran Church in America . . . The American Lutheran Conference offers to the Lutheran in America the best answer to the problem of church unity.' . . . As Dr. T. F. Gullixson, past-President of the Conference, looked into the future, he used the analogy of the log raft floated down the nearby Mississippi River . . . It is a composite raft of all five bodies, for the day of individualistic stamp of rival lumber camps is passing. Two difficult problems endanger the solidarity of the log raft: the reactions to the nationalistic sympathies in the European war, and the reactions to recent developments in efforts toward unity among Lutherans in America . . . Regarding the latter problem, he advised that we study the degree of detail which is necessary for real unity, and what is right and courteous procedure in establishing such unity. He pointed to the universal recognition of the need of unification all along the line, and questioned the possibility of our continuing by 'segmentation' . . . President Poppen voiced the attitude of all of us when he declared: 'We want you to quit talking as though the American Lutheran Church has any intention of leaving the American Lutheran Conference. None of us have advocated that. Won't you please quit saying that.' Over and over the assurance was given that we value our associations in this Conference too highly to give them up for any other. . . . The Commission on Unity reported on the degree of unity attained within the Conference, in spite of nationalistic and traditional differences; called attention to the great need of still closer unity among Lutherans in the face of world situations today, especially in the field of foreign missions; and proposed that the president of the Conference invite the Presidents of the United Lutheran Church and of the Missouri Synod to issue a joint call for a conference on such problems. Dr. Reu presented this report. . . . In order to make sure that the organization set up ten years ago is suited to the conditions and needs today, a special committee was constituted to study again the entire organization and constitution of the Conference. Efforts are to be made to bring about closer relations between the synods already in the Conference and to extend the bounds of the Conference to include synods not yet in it; in short to make the fullest use of the American Lutheran Conference to deepen and widen fellowship among all the Lutherans in America. This important committee consists of three representatives from each of the five synods in the Conference: the President of each synod, a clerical representative and a lay representative from each synod. Our own American Lutheran Church is represented on this Committee by President Em. Poppen, Professor E. C. Fendt, and Judge Henry Graven. . . . Yes, we are fully convinced that the American Lutheran Conference is an excellent agency for doing good. May the next decade witness a larger unfolding of the almost limitless possibilities for Kingdom service that the American Lutheran Conference possesses!" (*Lutheran Standard*, Dec. 7, 1940).

A. E. B.

○ The Dogmatic-Historical Background Of The Present Union Movement With Special Reference to the Specific Doctrines Involved

By Rev. J. Buenger

(Continued)

3. The Church

One of the most precious treasures the Reformation has brought us is the pure Scripture doctrine of the Church, and we should guard this treasure as jealously as the doctrine of Justification and of the Scriptures. Over against the Roman anti-Christian conception of the Church as an outward organization with the pope as its visible head, Luther stressed the truth that according to Scripture the Church is nothing but the whole number of true believers, the body of Christ, and that this Holy Christian Church possesses all the treasures and rights which the pope and the Roman hierarchy had arrogated to themselves. There are many roads leading to Rome. Adulteration of the pure doctrine of the Church is one of them.

Walther, in the introduction to his great book "The Voice of Our Church regarding the Question of the Church and the Ministry," could truthfully say: "We have not molded the doctrine of our church according to our conditions, but we have molded these according to the doctrine of our church." But in Germany the theologians of the nineteenth century had actually molded the doctrine of the Church and the Ministry according to the conditions existing in the State churches. The fact that the use of the Word and the Sacraments is necessary to create and keep faith in the hearts of men was to them a welcome pretext for construing a new conception of the Church as an institution in which these means of grace are properly administered under the direction of a church government ordained of God. While not denying the "invisible side of the Church" they insisted that the Christian Church, nevertheless is a visible organization of men gathered by and around Word and Sacrament consisting of true believers and sham Christians kept together by the common use of the means of grace. In other words, they held that the Church in the proper sense is invisible and visible at the same time.

It is evident that this is a mixture of Lutheran doctrine and the Roman idea of the Church and hence apostasy from the pure doctrine. The well known Scripture passages, Eph. 5, 25-27; 1 Pet. 2, 5, and all texts in which the Church is called the body of Christ,

of which He Himself is the Head and the Christians His members, make it impossible to define the Church, in the strict sense of the word, as an assembly consisting of true Christians and hypocrites. It is true that the word "Church" is in a wider sense also used for the whole number of those who confess the Christian faith. The controversy is not at all about this use of the word, but about the definition of the one Holy Christian Church in the proper sense of the word.

In this country a heated controversy was carried on between the Missouri Synod and the Buffalo Synod regarding the doctrine of the Church and the Ministry before there ever was an Iowa Synod. Now, in order to shed the proper light on the A. L. C. Declaration on the Church and the corresponding recommendation of our Committee No. 16, it will be necessary to retrace the difference in the question to its very origin, the controversy with the Buffalo Synod.

The "status controversiae" was from the very outset clear and definite. The Saxon theologians confessed that the Church, in the proper sense of the Word, is the communion of saints and nothing else. As such it is invisible since we cannot see faith in the heart of man, but believe on the basis of Scripture that there is, and always will be, a number of true believers on earth. Thus the doctrine of the Church is an article of faith. Word and Sacrament, as means whereby faith is created and kept in the hearts of men, are indeed indispensable for the existence of the Church, because without the means of grace there can be no faith. They are the infallible marks of the Church ("notae ecclesiae"), since according to God's promise, they are not constituent parts of the Church itself.

Rev. J. A. A. Grabau, on the other hand, taught that the Church is the visible assembly composed of a body of teachers and a body of householders. (Hochstetter, p. 182.) The Lutheran Church, he contended, is the Church, outside of which there is no salvation. (Cf. also *The Concordia Cyclopaedia*, pp. 506ff.)

This difference came out very plainly during the Buffalo Colloquy in 1866 where Pastor von Rohr, unlike the other Buffalo pastors who were present, insisted on a visible side of the Church, consisting in the use of Word and Sacrament. He said "that Scripture speaks only of one holy visible and invisible Church, as it is and appears on earth, visible as the assembly around the pure Word and Sacrament with intermingled hypocrites, invisible with regard to what we believe of it."

"That the Large Catechism and the seventh Article of the Augsburg Confession include the pure preaching of the Gospel and the proper use of the Sacraments in the essence of the Church, not only as marks ('notae') because without Word and Sacrament there can be no Church. Therefore Word and Sacrament also, as to their efficacy and operation, essentially belong to the definition of the one Holy Christian Church."

Very positively Pastor von Rohr here censures that the means of grace are merely marks of the Church and means without which the Church cannot exist as insufficient; and he insists that they are more than this, that they must be regarded as essential parts of the Church and are therefore to be included when defining the essence of the Church in its proper sense.

Over against this statement of Pastor von Rohr, the members of the Missouri Synod declared: "That the difference in the doctrine of the Church between them and Rev. von Rohr consists in this that the latter insists that the 'one catholic universal Church' of the Augustana and Apology, properly so called, is the one which 'comprises evil and good men' (which according to the Apology can be said of the Church when it is not taken properly but 'large', i. e. in a wider sense); furthermore in this that Pastor von Rohr contends that the one Holy Christian Church of the Third Article is not (as our Church confesses in the Large Catechism of Luther) the 'congregation in which there are only saints' or 'a holy group or congregation on earth of saints exclusively under one Head, Christ', etc., but the mixed Church. Finally the above mentioned colloquists declare that if by 'essence' everything is understood without which the Church cannot come into and remain in existence, then they also reckon Word and Sacrament unto the essence of the Church."

The fact that this declaration has time and again been misquoted and misused compels us to analyze it carefully. The "fathers" do not say here that they also count Word and Sacrament to the essence of the Church, but they state a condition under which they also would accept this expression which ordinarily is objectionable and which they have always rejected as a false doctrine when used in the sense of their opponents. What, then, is the condition? "If by essence everything is understood without which the Church cannot come into and remain in existence." So every thing depends on the sense in which the word "essence" is taken. This word may mean the

essential parts of a thing, that of which a thing consists and which makes a thing what it is. In this sense and in this connection the word "essence" was used by the Neo-Lutherans, by Pastors Grabau and von Rohr. They meant to say that Word and Sacrament are really constituent parts of the Church itself; and that this being the case, the Church in its proper sense is visible, not only because Word and Sacrament are visible but also because this definition includes the hypocrites who with others outwardly use the Word and Sacrament. In this sense the statement that Word and Sacrament belong to the essence of the Church is a false doctrine and has always been treated as an error divisive of church-fellowship by our Synod.

But the fathers knew very well that the word "essence" may also be used in the sense of "existence". If used in this sense, the expression means that without Word and Sacrament the Church cannot exist. As Pastor von Rohr had correctly said, "Without Word and Sacrament there can be no Church." But did he mean to say this when he declared that Word and Sacrament belong to the essence of the Church? He distinctly said that Word and Sacrament **did not only** in this sense belong to the Church, but also as constituent parts of the Church itself they "essentially belong to the definition of the one Holy Christian Church."

This makes the situation perfectly clear. Pastor von Rohr agreed with his opponents in the statement that Word and Sacrament are indispensable for the existence of the Church, but disagreed with them by his insistence on counting Word and Sacrament as constituent parts of the Church itself in this sense that the use of these means of grace renders the Holy Christian Church visible, so that hypocrites also are included in this Church.

The fathers of our Synod on their part set off the one point in which they agreed with Rev. von Rohr, that Word and Sacrament belong to the essence of the Church if "essence" is meant in the sense of "existence"; but—they rejected his error of reckoning the means of grace unto the Church itself, rendering it visible and including hypocrites. It is important to keep this in mind in order to see through the misuse which this statement had to undergo repeatedly since.

When the Iowa Synod was founded in 1853 this difference in the doctrine of the Church and the Ministry was the direct cause of the split between Missouri and those who founded the Iowa Synod. This is expressed also in

the Davenport theses of the year 1873. We select these theses to bring out the Iowan view of the Church because in them for the first time reference is made to the above mentioned statement.

"The Davenport Theses"

"1. The first difference between the synod of Iowa and that of Missouri is the doctrine of the Church and Ministry. Respecting the doctrine of the Church we could not assent to the Missouri Synod in this that the Church essentially is invisible in the sense that everything pertaining to its visibility must be excluded from the concept of Church essence.

"2. Against this we insisted that the Church principally, indeed, is communion of the Holy Ghost and faith in the heart, but also communion of the Word and the Sacraments and in this sense visible and invisible at the same time.

"3. Since, however, in colloquy with Buffalo it has been admitted on the part of Missouri that the communion of the means of grace must be included in the essence of the Church, we no longer know ourselves to be in any opposition to our opponents regarding the doctrine of the Church."

Here the statement of our Fathers made in Buffalo is quoted in a garbled form. As shown above, the Fathers did not simply say that they also reckoned the means of grace unto the essence of the Church, but they stated the condition under which they could accept the contested expression, a condition with which neither Rev. von Rohr nor the Iowans were ever satisfied, a condition under which the Church in the proper sense is not rendered visible, but remains the invisible communion of saints and nothing else. But although this misstatement was repeated in 1893 (S. Fritschel, **Unterscheidungslehren**, p. 8ff.), it is evident that the Iowans did not mean to express the sincere conviction that a real unity in the doctrine of the Church was obtained between them and Missouri. It was merely an attempt at making it appear as though the Missourians had for once blundered and unwittingly given testimony to the doctrine of the Iowa Synod. For when at the colloquy at Milwaukee, in Nov. 1867, Dr. Walther in enumerating the doctrinal differences which separated the two synods also stressed their false doctrine of the Church, the Fritschels did not dare to refer to that statement made at Buffalo. And all along, in their polemics against Missouri, the Iowans presented the "status controversiae" at this point correctly.

When the Synodical Conference was organized in 1872, the Ohio Synod was in full agreement with Missouri as to the doctrine of the Church. It was only after the negotiations with Iowa had started that the Ohio Synod was also infected with the Romanizing error of a visible side of the Church. Since the merger, the A.L.C. professes the position of the old Iowa Synod. At the colloquy at Richmond, Ind., in 1883 the Lutheran spirit within the Ohio Synod was still strong enough to secure a thesis on the doctrine of the Church which put the Iowans on the defensive. It read:

"A. The Church in the proper sense is the congregation of the true believers, created and edifying itself through the means of grace.

"B. As to its essence the Church on earth is and remains invisible.

"C. The fellowship of the means of grace is a necessary manifestation of the Church and an infallible mark of its existence."

Dr. S. Fritschel experienced difficulty in defending this thesis against attacks from his own Synod and in showing in what sense it was meant and accepted by its representatives.

The fact that the means of grace are mentioned under A was sufficient for him to give his assent to it. For thereby the visible side of the Church seemed to him adequately emphasized, although the whole of the theses expresses the Lutheran doctrine of the Church as confessed at that time not only by Missouri but also by the Ohio Synod.

But at the Colloquy at Michigan City in 1893, and at Toledo in 1907, the Iowan spirit asserted itself with a vengeance. Here the Ohioans accepted the same thesis they had agreed upon at Richmond, but with the addition: "And in so far the Church is visible." (!) This was a complete victory for Iowa. A number of other doctrinal differences were discussed which could not at that time be settled, but both the Iowan "Kirchenblatt" and the Ohioan "Theologische Zeitlaetter" declared that these differences were not to be considered divisive of church fellowship, which now sounds familiar to us. Thus fraternal relations between these two bodies were established, as far as the doctrine of the Church is concerned, on the same basis which is now offered to us in the A.L.C. Declaration.

But it is interesting to observe how this union was at the time regarded and estimated in our circles. "L. u. W.", 1907, June issue, p. 281, in commenting on this thesis on the doctrine of the Church approvingly quotes the "Quartalschrift" as follows: "We

justly marvel that the Ohioans, especially those from the Synodical Conference, in this matter, which is certainly not irrelevant, fell into the snare of the Iowans." ("Man muss sich billig wundern, dass die Ohioer, namentlich die aus der Synodal-Konferenz stammenden, in dieser Sache, die doch wahrlich nicht irrelevant ist, den Iowauern ins Garn gelaufen sind.") What would Dr. Bente, who wrote that L. u. W. article, say today?!

The Chicago Thesis on the doctrines of the Church has two parts:

"IV. The Church

"14) The Church of Christ on earth, established and being built up by the Holy Spirit through the means of grace, is composed of all true believers, that is, the totality of all those who put their trust in the vicarious living, suffering, and dying of Christ and are united with one another by nothing else than this common faith.

"15) Accordingly we confess with the Apology: 'However, the Christian Church consists not alone in fellowship of outward marks, but it consists chiefly in inward communion of eternal blessings in the heart, as of the Holy Ghost, of faith, of the fear and love of God. And, this same Church has also eternal marks by which it may be known; namely, where there is pure use of God's Word and the Sacraments are administered in conformity with the same, there certainly is the Church, there are Christians; and this Church only is called the body of Christ in the Scriptures.' (M., 152, 5; Trigl., 227.)"

According to the declaration of Dr. Fritschel, given in 1883, the first part of the above definition is acceptable to our opponents because the means of grace are included in it. And Dr. Reu, at a conference at Dubuque in 1924, said of this thesis: "The Church has two sides, a visible and an invisible one; in Thesis 14 the visible side of the Church is confessed." The quotation from the Apology is that very passage which Iowa has always used, or rather, misused, to make it appear as though their doctrine of the Church were in accord with the Lutheran Confessions. But according to the "scopus", the whole context and the wording, the passage can have no other meaning than this: The mere fact that godless people also have fellowship with the outward signs, Word and Sacrament, does not make them members of the Christian Church, which is the body of Christ. The main thing, that which really counts and makes men members of the true Church, the body of Christ, is inward communion with God through faith

and love; while the means of grace are indeed infallible marks indicating where the Church, the communion of saints, is to be found.

But in spite of the declaration of Dr. S. Fritschel and of Dr. Reu; in spite of the quotation so often misused by Iowa; whoever at that time in our circles warned that in this Thesis the Iowan doctrine of the Church was hidden was not heard but was regarded as a distrustful fanatic biased by his dead orthodoxy.

The Brief Statement, while calling the means of grace "marks" of the Church, rejects the modern idea of a "visible side" of the Church, par. 25; and in par. 44 refuses to count this difference under open questions. Since the A.L.C. uses the expression "Open Questions" and "non-divisive difference" as synonymous terms, it could not possibly accept these parts of the Brief Statement. However, what did happen when in 1938 the A.L.C. representatives, encouraged by the accommodating spirit which they found in some quarters of the Missouri Synod, came out into the light with the request that their idea of a visible side of the Church be tolerated? This is the very difference which in 1853 had caused the split. The founders of the Iowa Synod had declared this difference to be a non-divisive theological opinion; the Missouri Synod, on the contrary, had from the very start declared and treated the Iowan view of the visibility of the Church in the proper sense as a Romanizing error divisive of church-fellowship. Nor does the A.L.C. Declaration leave any doubt as to the sense in which it uses the word "essence". For it does not say that Word and Sacrament are indispensable for the existence of the Church, but very plainly it uses the word "essence" in the same sense as Pastor von Rohr had done, stressing the "visible side" of the Church when defining its essence. The Declaration says: "In connection with the doctrine of the Church the question debated was whether it is permissible to speak of a visible side of the Church when defining its essence. We declare that to do so is not a false doctrine if by this visible side nothing else is meant than the use of the means of grace." *General Proceedings*, 1938, p. 223. This is the very sense in which it has always been rejected by our Synod as a false doctrine, because it includes hypocrites (who also are in the fellowship of these means) in the one Christian Church, the body of Christ. This request might have opened the eyes of those who were of the opinion that our opponents had

in the Chicago Theses already dropped their old errors and accepted our doctrine. Still, not only our Intersynodical Committee but also Committee 16 persuaded the St. Louis convention to tolerate the expression. And what did they use to support their recommendation? Of all things that same statement from the Buffalo Colloquy repeatedly misused by Iowa in order to create this false impression as though Missouri had abandoned its original position and sanctioned the Iowan doctrine! It says in the recommendation: "It has been felt by some" (!) "that, if this expression 'the visible side of the Church' were permitted to remain unexplained, it might give occasion for the fostering of false doctrine, such as the Romanizing teaching which represents the Church as an external religion and social institution. Your committee finds that our Synodical fathers conceded that the Word and Sacraments may in a certain sense be considered as belonging to the essence of the Church. Therefore a difference in this point need not be divisive of church-fellowship when this expression, 'The visible side of the Church', is understood in the light of our Synod's pronouncement by Dr. Walther in 'Das Buffaloer Kolloquium, 1866, p. 9.'" But, as we have seen, in the light of Dr. Walther's pronouncement, the Church is **not** visible but **invisible only**. And still this correct statement of the Fathers was used to persuade the convention to tolerate the old error of the visible side of the Church's consisting in the use of the means of grace. And the convention, without verifying the reference, "unanimously" accepted the recommendation, trusting that with the declaration of the Fathers, mentioned by Committee 16, everything would certainly be in order.

This does not mean that Committee 16 intentionally deceived the convention. On the contrary, it seems as though the unfortunate quotation was suggested to our representatives by the A.L.C. men, and that, in the great hurry in which the whole matter was dispatched, the synodical committee did not take time to weigh those words carefully. But the sad fact remains that the whole convention (with the exception of a few dissenters who either had no vote or were overlooked) was fatally misled. For, we repeat it, the statement made in 1866, on the strength of which the recommendation was accepted, proves the very opposite of what it was meant to prove by Committee 16, so that an error which our Synod has always rejected was palliated by the very words in which our fathers had taken precaution against it.

Thus the old Iowan "theology" has tri-

umphed again not only over Ohio but even over Missouri—if the St. Louis resolutions are to stand. **Verily, acceptance of the St. Louis Union Articles of 1938 must be rescinded.**

(to be continued)

☉ From Our Mail Bag

From among a great number of communications which have been coming in a steady stream to the desks of the **Confessional Lutheran** staff all the while we should like to cite the following encouraging sentiments of a member of the faculty of our theological seminary in St. Louis:—

"I feel that we should give all sincere pastors having a sense of the tremendous responsibility now resting upon us an opportunity to voice their fears and sentiments. Indifferentism and unionism are foes facing us, and in general it is our pastors whose testimony counts most. May God keep us all in His grace, as He has promised to do, if only we love His Word. May His blessings rest upon you in your entire work to His glory."

P. H. B.

☉ A Correction

In the December Issue of **The Confessional Lutheran** p. 80, col. 2, lines 28-31 from the top should read: "As to the will of God, Dr. Pieper untiringly pointed out that in predestination no other will of God is realized and carried out than the universal will of grace which without distinction extends over all men."

P. H. B.

☉ The Materialistic Approach Again

In a recent issue of the **American Lutheran**, under the heading "The Reason Why," there is found the strange statement: "It seems to us upon rather careful inquiry that whenever someone is biliously bitter in his attitude toward others and using big words in his endeavor to declare his own soundness of speech and to ascribe falsehood and treachery to his brethren, that such a person could be quickly cured of his phobias if he were given greater prestige and a more adequate salary. Much heresy hunting could be brought to an abrupt end could this means be applied." Vol. XXIII, No. 9 (September, 1940), p. 5.

We pass this very strange statement along without any other comment than that indicated in our title above.

P. H. B.

☉ Our Heritage

Even adversaries of our beloved Synodical Conference and the Missouri Synod have marveled at the temper and spirit for purity and unity of doctrine which exists in our bodies. It is our honest conviction that they would marvel a whole lot more if, instead of adversaries, they were in membership with us and really knew from within how much of indifference, callousness, and unwillingness to serve and to sacrifice for His kingdom our merciful Lord has to overlook in order to preserve for us this blessed heritage of our Church. There is a lot of lukewarm, half-hearted appreciation of this heritage among us, and we are in grave danger to lose this blessing to ourselves and our posterity unless we return to that first love which was manifested in a willingness to forsake anything and everything except the promises and directions of the living God.—Rev. H. Hartner, in Essay on "Unionism, With Particular Reference to the Lutheran Bodies in America", Southern Nebraska District, 1936.*

P. H. B.

☉ Trying The Spirits

There is no pastor in the Missouri Synod whose preaching and teaching is not subject to the proving of his congregation. It is a divine injunction to every Christian that he should prove the spirits whether they are of God (1 John 4, 1). The Bible calls the Beaeans "noble" because they searched the Scriptures to see whether what Paul had preached to them was so (Acts 17, 11). Beaean congregations make true pastors happy. It would be a destructive calamity for any congregation if it never in any way would try to prove what is preached and taught in its midst. Synodical officials and other servants should ever be thankful to God for an alert rank and file membership which is constantly proving and trying what they do and write. Indifference on the part of the membership of a Synod to the activities of its synodical servants is the beginning of the downfall of any church body, unless that indifference is checked.

G. S.

* An excellent essay throughout, which deserves to be studied widely in our Synod today.

**ACCEPTANCE OF THE ST. LOUIS
UNION ARTICLES OF 1938 MUST
BE RESCINDED**

THE CONFESSIONAL LUTHERAN

Published In The Interest Of Ecumenical Lutheranism

MOTTO: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."--1 Cor. 1, 10.

REV. PAUL H. BURGDOFF
Editor, Clinton, Iowa

REV. J. BUENGER
Assistant Editor

REV. C. M. GULLERUD
Contributing Editor

REV. ARTHUR E. BECK, Business Manager, Foley, Minnesota

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VOL. II

FEBRUARY, 1941

NO. 2

IN THIS ISSUE:—The Unalterable Prerequisite of Fellowship Among Confessional Lutherans—A Resolution to Rescind the St. Louis Union Articles of 1938—Christian Realism—Mistaken Argumentation—More Mistaken Argumentation—Should We Become Fundamentalists?—What Has the Rank and File of a Church's Membership to Say?—The Bible in the American Lutheran Church—"In the Light of Our Declaration"—The Question of Honesty in the Lutheran Union Movement—Walther's Theses on the Modern Theory of Open Questions—Reason or Revelation.

● The Unalterable Prerequisite of Fellowship Among Confessional Lutherans

"Even though some doctrines lie further off from the center of faith than others, yet all doctrines belong within the compass of saving truth. And we of course demand unity in the whole sphere of doctrine, Scriptural doctrine, as a prerequisite of church-fellowship."—Dr. G. Stoeckhardt, in *Lehre und Wehre*, Vol. 50, p. 441.

P. H. B.

● A Resolution to Rescind the St. Louis Union Articles of 1938

The *Confessional Lutheran* has, not only in articles appearing in this issue, but throughout its existence, consistently advocated rescission of the untenable and to us unacceptable St. Louis Union Resolutions of 1938, which have by some mistakenly been held to be a "sufficient" doctrinal basis of union with the A.L.C., this well-meant but erroneous assumption being based upon the mistaken major premise that essential doctrinal differences between the Missouri Synod and the American Lutheran Church had ceased to exist by 1938. We shall continue to advocate such rescission. From many quarters we have been asked to suggest some proposal which might serve

as a basis for conference discussion and possible action toward ultimate rescission. We therefore submit a very simple resolution which might well serve such a purpose.

Ample material bearing on such a resolution will be found in past and future issues of *The Confessional Lutheran*, as well as elsewhere—e.g. in Dr. P. E. Kretzmann's mimeographed essays on "Fundamental and Non-Fundamental Doctrines and Church-Fellowship," "Testimony of the 'Fathers' Concerning 'Non-Fundamental' Doctrines," and "Unionism and Common or Joint Prayer in the Light of the Word of God";* Prof. W. Albrecht's mimeographed conference report, "The Present Status of the Union Movement";** Dr. S. Ylvisaker's fine essay, "The Question of Non-Fundamentals in the Light of Scripture," contained in the 1940 Report of the Norwegian Synod;*** "The Different Spirit," by Rev. J. Buenger;**** "The Desired Unity."

* The first two essays named can prove very helpful toward setting one right with respect to many of the errors of our 1938 Convention Committee No. 16 and of the pamphlet titled "The Historic Lutheran Position in Non-Fundamentals." (C.P.H.). Order from the author.

** Order from the author.

*** See the highly commendatory review of this timely and excellent essay, by Dr. P. E. Kretzmann in *Conc. Theol. Monthly*, Dec., 1940, p. 960. Order from Lutheran Synod Book Company, Bethany College, Mankato, Minnesota. Price, 35 cts.

**** Order from same address as above. Price, 10 cts.

and "The Old and the New Differences" by the same author;***** "The Historical Open Questions Among American Lutherans," by Rev. Theo. Hanssen.*****

The resolution which we propose is as follows:—

WHEREAS, the resolutions on Lutheran union adopted by the last Synodical Convention (St. Louis, 1938) are based, in part, upon an un-Scriptural assumption, to wit, that certain non-fundamental doctrines are not divisive of church-fellowship, and, in part, upon inadequate and misleading quotations of articles contained in early volumes of our publications, and, as for the rest, upon the mistaken assumption that essential doctrinal differences between the Missouri Synod and the American Lutheran Church, involving both the Sola Scriptura principle and the Sola Gratia principle, had ceased to exist; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the resolutions of the last convention be rescinded and that a new committee be appointed to carry out the resolutions of 1929.

P. H. B.

● Christian Realism

We are Christian realists.

We want no part, and we want others to know that we shall have no part, in any of the false and delusive unionistic optimism that fills the world in our day.

Even so we want it known that we have no part in any mistaken optimism, however well-intended it may be, which operates in the manner of the "tender of fraternity" brought to the recent Detroit Convention of the American Lutheran Church by the chairman of the Missouri Synod's Committee on Lutheran Union. Merely on the basis of the fact that, contrary to the stark reality of things, it "became apparent" in meetings of this committee and a commission of the American Lutheran Church (1935-1938) "that on all of the **main doctrines** of God's Word we were in full agreement," other doctrines of that same Holy Word of God, which to us are just as binding, being declared non-divisive, that "tender of fraternity" voiced the appeal to "move forward to the consummation" of the contemplated union between Missouri and the A.L.C.*

We believe in Christian realism.

We believe in Christian confession.

In accordance with such prime requisites of our faith we must declare that we can have no part in the mistaken optimism and the false hope held out to the A.L.C. in the "tender of fraternity" referred to. But more than this. By that same token we are, as we shall ever firmly remain, convinced that acceptance of the St. Louis Union Articles of 1938, which were admittedly based merely on "apparent" agreement, even in the main doctrines of God's Word, must be rescinded. There is for us, and cannot be, any other way to true union than one which begins with such rescission. True concord can only be brought about by a formula of concord which is based upon the actual **status controversiae**. To advocate such a procedure is simply to advocate the good old historically Lutheran and Christian way. We ask for that way, and will have no other.

P. H. B.

● Mistaken Argumentation

We have on a previous occasion discussed some of the mistaken references of our Missouri Synod's 1938 Convention Committee No. 16 to our Synodical Fathers.* At the same time we showed how the 1939 essayist of the Southern Nebraska District, and our **Concordia Theological Monthly** which reprinted the portion of the essay in question, committed the identical mistake which that committee had committed, in an endeavor to bolster continued and more widespread acceptance of that committee's untenable report.** We had at the same time called attention to the fact that there are other things in the essay in question which call for criticism, and we had promised to discuss some of these things at a later time. We now wish to show some of the mistakes of which the essay to which we have referred is guilty, and on the strength of which Committee No. 16's report and the St. Louis Resolutions of 1938 generally, have unfortunately managed to carry on some sort of existence thus far.

In the essay to which reference has been made, it is stated: "A non-fundamental doctrine simply is one that has no relation to the foundation of faith, that is, to the doctrine of justification by grace for Christ's sake through faith." (P. 33.)

A first error of this statement is this, that it mistakenly restricts the Christian foundation of faith to the dogmatic foundation in

***** Order from Northwestern Publishing House, 4p 25 cts and 50 cts., respectively.

***** Order from the author.

* Cf. C. F. B. at St. Louis, 1938, p. 157.

* "Some Historical Errors of the Union Articles adopted by the Missouri Synod in 1938," July, 1940, p. 53ff.

** "A Correction for the Theological Monthly," Ibid., p. 55.

the generally accepted sense, (the doctrine of justification and related doctrines). The truth is that **EVERY doctrine of Scripture, all that it teaches, not excepting its minutest particle, belongs to the Christian foundation of faith.** It belongs to the organic foundation, which is simply nothing more nor less than the entire Bible—all of the Bible and nothing but the Bible. **It is this foundation that is decisive, and definitely and finally decisive, as to what a church dare and should teach.** And let us add, since we are engaged in a discussion toward union, **the BIBLE, in its entirety is Christendom's God-given unifying organ,—** its organic foundation of faith. We speak of a "dogmatic foundation," in the generally accepted sense, only in so far as we are interested in assuming in Christian charity what persons may still be regarded as Christians*** in spite of the fact that they may be ignorant of or in error regarding much Christian doctrine, and members of churches which cannot be fellowshiped, because they do not confess all of Christian truth and nothing but Christian truth.

But there is a second error, more important even than the first, if possible, in the statement which we have quoted above. The first error, which we have already discussed, has to do with the Sola Scriptura principle, that is, with the principle expressed in the slogan: The Bible, all of the Bible, and nothing but the Bible. The second, which we wish to discuss now, is related to the Sola Gratia principle, i.e., to the principle of salvation "alone by grace."

Citing the statement, which we have already quoted, again, we read: "A non-fundamental doctrine simply is one that has no relation to the (dogmatic) foundation of our faith, that is, to the doctrine of justification by grace for Christ's sake, through faith." Now, that again is simply a mistaken, untenable, and unacceptable statement. The truth is that **EVERY Christian doctrine is related to the dogmatic foundation of faith, in the generally accepted sense, that is, to the doctrine of justification by grace for Christ's sake through faith** (the central Christian doctrine), and to its more intimately related doctrines. That truth has always been correctly taught by Missouri. Missouri also rightly contended for this truth against the old Iowa Synod, which is now incorporated in the A.I.C., in just such union discussions as the present one. In an article, titled "The Doctrinal Differences between Missouri and Iowa," published

in *Lehre und Wehre*, Vol. 50, p. 411, blessed Dr. Stoeckhardt, e.g., says very pertinently: "Even though some doctrines are further removed from the center of faith than others, yet all doctrines belong within the compass of saving truth. And we of course demand unity in the whole sphere of doctrine, Scriptural doctrine, as a prerequisite of church-fellowship".

In criticizing the statement which we have found it necessary to discuss here, we are not in any way charging anyone with conscious and wilful error, much less with apostasy from the faith. We are simply insisting that the essayist in question was mistaken in contending for the untenable position which he was advocating; that the district in question was mistaken in accepting his views; that the editor of our **Concordia Theological Monthly** was motivated by a zeal for God and for union which was "not according to knowledge" (Rom. 10, 2), when this periodical lent itself to a wider dissemination of such mistaken views (July, 1940); and that the **Lutheran Witness**, which particularly recommended the essay in question as one containing "a very lucid exposition of the points at issue" (Mar. 5, 1940, p. 77), is in the same condemnation. **** We insist that the confusion which was introduced into our Church by the acceptance of the untenable St. Louis Resolutions of 1938 has been and is being made worse by such unacceptable attempts at defense of those resolutions, regardless of how good and sincere the intentions of their promoters may be. We insist that we should have a voice in our church's maintenance of doctrinal purity, and that the unfortunate placing of the issues involved in the present union discussion into the open by the hasty adoption of the 1938 Resolutions of our Synod, and their subsequent defense in official and unofficial publications within our church, make it imperative that we on our part should not withhold like testimony.***** We do this in all charity, and out of love for our church, and we trust that our testimony will likewise be accepted in all charity. In doing so we are encouraged by the thanks which ever so many have already expressed for our humble testimony, and by the conviction that we are doing what God has asked of every soul that has been sanctified in the truth.

**** Let it be said here that the *Lutheraner* is the one publication in our midst which has kept its head throughout this union movement. A whole volume could be written with respect to this fact. It is regrettable that the circulation of this periodical must remain confined to a German minority in our midst.

*** We say this "may be regarded as Christians" advisedly; for we never absolutely know. The Church is never visible. It must remain a matter of faith.

***** Incidentally, we have also long ago taken other steps which an extreme measure of charity may have seemed to suggest.

That the essayist in question, and the Southern Nebraska District, were merely acting in confusion, regardless of what their intentions may have been, is clear from the essay itself, which we are discussing. For earlier in that essay the fine statement had been made: "A denial of any clearly revealed doctrine of the Bible breaks down our entire corpus doctrinae **and is directly or indirectly connected with the chief doctrines of the Gospel.** It is plain, therefore, that it is the historical position of the Lutheran Church that fellowship must be based upon unity in all doctrines of the Holy Bible." (**Proceedings, South Nebr. District, 1939**, p. 28.) Thus the essay contradicts and rightly refutes itself.

But to go on with our discussion.

The essayist in question mistakenly instances his wrong contention with regard to non-fundamental doctrines, as expressed above, with the example of the story of Jonah. (P. 33ff.) In direct contradiction to what he says—namely, that non-fundamental doctrines, like the story of Jonah have no relation to the central doctrine of our faith—that which the Bible (the organic foundation of faith) records regarding Jonah and the great prophet-swallowing fish has this relation to the dogmatic foundation of faith, in the generally accepted sense, that is, to the doctrine of justification by grace for Christ's sake, and to the real or essential, Personal foundation, that is, to the mediating Person, Christ: that **doubt concerning it, or its denial impairs the veracity of Christ** who vouches for the truth of the story in a most important way, making it a symbol, and, in fact, the sign of His resurrection, Mt. 12, 40; and it thus in effect **destroys the whole foundation of our faith.** What the essayist says, when he writes: "If the fish had never swallowed Jonah or if the story were not in the Bible, the foundation of our faith would still be sure and certain" is simply not to the point. It does not, and cannot, prove that the story of Jonah has no relation to the real foundation or to the dogmatic foundation of our faith. It only proves what needs no proof: that **if the incident had not occurred at all**, or if it were not a fact that it is recorded as having occurred, then it would have no relation to the foundation of our faith. Of course it would not. How could it? How can anything which did not occur at all, which in other words does not exist, have any relation to anything? How could a thing which we were not given to know have any relation to what we are asked to believe? But the fact is that the swallow-

ing of Jonah **did** occur and **is** recorded in the Scriptures; and it therefore belongs to the foundation of our faith. It belongs to the organic foundation of faith—Scripture. And it is related to the dogmatic foundation (the central doctrine, justification by faith) because it is vitally related to the mediating Person, Christ (the real foundation), through whom our justification has been effected.*****

The argumentation of our essayist is not only at fault **theologically**; it also presents a **logical** absurdity. Try it out by a concrete illustration or two. For instance, this: A mother's child has no relation to its mother; for if the child had never been born, the mother's existence would still be sure and certain. Or this: the various branches and twigs of a tree have no relation to the tree; for, if these had never come into existence, the tree would still be there.

Let us simply put down this fundamental truth and cling to it: **the entire Bible is one related whole, and no part of it dare be denied or made appear unimportant, unessential, and therefore categorically "non-divisive" of fellowship.** (It is true that some parts of the Bible are more important than others, some less important, **in a certain way.** But that is another question, which we are not going to discuss here. What is important to say here is that "less important" never means unimportant.) It is, no doubt, because this simple truth was momentarily lost sight of amid a high pressure of things that the St. Louis Resolutions of 1938 were adopted. Let it be said in all charity, and with honor to whom honor is due, giving glory to God also in this, that the St. Louis Resolutions, were, thank God, never unanimously adopted, and never will be. They were not even unanimously adopted by those who had to bear the full brunt of the 1938 convention because of their presence there. We have proof in our hands that they were not even unanimously favored by Committee 16; that the committee heard strong objection from an outstanding member, one whom we all rightly revere***** and recognize as a leader in our Church. We are firmly convinced that the St. Louis Resolutions were not only premature but a serious mistake. The matter of union with the A.L.C. should have been still delayed in 1938, that church should have been further dealt with,

***** This instance may serve to illustrate again the intimate integration of the threefold foundation of faith. It is ONE three-fold foundation, none of the separate parts of which we dare tamper with without fear of destroying all. This question has previously been discussed in connection with the Creation Day Question. Cp. "Destroying the Foundations," Vol. 1, 3, p. 11.
***** Mt. 5, 19.

and the other synods of the Synodical Conference should also first have been consulted in the matter. As regards non-fundamental doctrines in particular, the position must be maintained that also in these things the authority of the divine Word must be permitted to stand unmoved and the clarity of the Scriptures must be clung to; no ambiguity dare be made of it, putting the matter in such a way as though not much depends on this. In keeping with such a position, the St. Louis Resolutions of 1938 must be rescinded. They cannot be maintained. And, of course, all similar action, such as acceptance of the Southern Nebraska District's essay of 1939, must likewise be rescinded. There simply is and can be no other alternative.

P. H. B.

☛ More Mistaken Argumentation

The essay which has been discussed in the previous article contains more mistaken argumentation, besides that contained in the statement to which reference has already been made.

It advocates the position that "divergence of views in any doctrine not revealed in the Holy Bible does not disturb at all the unity of faith." (P. 34.)

It should not require many words to point out the fallacy of such a statement.

Simple truth is that whatever is taught in the Bible is Bible doctrine, and there dare be no divergence from it. On the other hand, whatever is not taught in the Bible dare never be made doctrine.

By way of illustration, the Catholic Church teaches many "doctrines" which are not revealed in the Holy Bible. It teaches, for instance, the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary, her eternal virginity, purgatory, and a multitude of other erroneous notions. The Reformed Church quite generally teaches chiliasm or millennialism. There is a divergence of views among millennialists regarding this "doctrine," which is not revealed in the Bible. Some are "pre-millennialists," others "post-millennialists." Not merely one or the other of these divergences of views, but all of them, disturb the unity of faith. For none of them are revealed in the Holy Bible. They are rather, one and all, contrary to Biblical revelation. They are themselves divergences from the Holy Bible, which permits us neither to add to, nor to subtract from, its doctrinal content.

The essayist of the 1939 Southern Nebraska District Convention himself correctly states

the Scriptural principles that determines this matter, and thus again fortunately contradicts and refutes himself. However, the key-statement which we are discussing, itself, is wrong. And it opens up the way for an un-Scriptural and anti-Scriptural divergence of views in matters of doctrine for which the American Lutheran Church, and the old Iowa Synod, which is being perpetuated by it, have always contended, and tolerance for which the St. Louis Resolutions of 1938 have mistakenly granted.

The essayist in question himself discusses one of the doctrinal divergences of the A.L.C., namely, that of millennialism. In doing so, he says, strangely enough: "We are speaking of people who reject the doctrine of the millennium." That is, of course, not at all the case. The A.L.C., also in its Declaration, expressly demands toleration of the false doctrine of "a millennial reign of Christ" with all of its characteristic features: a still future revelation of the Antichrist, the conversion of the Jews, and a physical resurrection of the Christian martyrs. We do not know of a single important characteristic that might still be needed to make complete a millennialistic system of "doctrine".

Discussing the last named feature of this systematized chiliastic "doctrine", that is, a vainly hoped for resurrection of the martyrs, the essayist says that he can find no fault with the statement of the A.L.C. Declaration that "If someone should wish to believe on the basis of Rev. 20, 4 that God may do again what He did once, . . . then such person may still be regarded as an orthodox Lutheran theologian." (P. 41.)

Now, we find a great deal of fault with that statement, as we necessarily must. It simply will not do to believe that because God did something once He may do it again. With God nothing is impossible. He **could**, therefore do again anything and everything which He did once. But whether He **may** do it again or not is quite another question. God once sent His Son into the world, having Him visibly appear among men, to establish His kingdom on earth. He ate and drank with them, healed the sick, and yes,—raised the dead. But there is no reason to believe and teach that He may do any or all of these things again as He once did. There is rather every reason to believe and know He will not do so. For Scripture expressly assures us that this is the case. And for what He may and will still do, we are to believe and teach only that He may and will do that for which we have His promise.

Now, our essayist calls attention to a passage, in which the A.L.C. says some suppose to find a promise of a physical resurrection of the martyrs. For it is said -- to repeat this: "If someone should wish to believe **on the basis of Rev. 20, 4** that God may do again what He did once . . . then such person may still be regarded as an orthodox Lutheran theologian." (Our emphasis.) But we ask, where is there any basis in Rev. 20, 4 for believing that God may do again what He did once, namely, that He may raise the bodies of the martyrs before the general resurrection of all the dead on the last day? The passage in question speaks of **souls**, to mention but this detail of the apocalyptic vision that is recorded here. We repeat that the question at issue here is not the question of a possibility of a resurrection to be performed by our Lord, and the issue should not be confused by the introduction of an argument resting upon that question. It is a question of whether God has given us the promise of such a resurrection. And there we say, as we must say, that to find in Rev. 20, 4 **a promise** of a physical resurrection is a perversion of this Scripture passage. The teaching of such a resurrection is, moreover, a teaching which is contrary to other clear passages of Scripture. It is just such a teaching of Jewish fables as Scripture and our Lutheran Confessions warn us against. True Lutheran teaching and confession is that God "will at the last day raise up me and all the dead." (**Luther's Small Catechism**, Explanation of Third Article of the Creed.)

Lest we be charged with omitting in the statement which we have now twice quoted, with a properly indicated omission, something vital to its discussion, we shall once more cite that statement, fully. It reads, in its entirety: "If someone should wish to believe on the basis of Rev. 20, 4, that God may do again what He did once, and if such person from such viewpoint does not draw consequences in conflict with Bible doctrines, then such person may still be regarded as an orthodox Lutheran theologian." Now, all that still needs to be said—and that is the point here—is this, that whoever teaches a physical resurrection of the martyrs on the basis of Rev. 20, 4 has already drawn from that passage unwarranted consequences that are in conflict with Bible doctrines. Our essayist also seems to sense this. For, again strangely enough, and once more contradicting himself, he had, earlier in the same essay asked: "If the American Lutheran Church is really orthodox in all matters with the exception of the

points noted (the four points regarding the Last things: millennium, Antichrist, conversion of the Jews, physical resurrection of the martyrs; and the fundamental question of a "visible side" of the invisible Church—these being the only points of difference between us and the A.L.C. that are discussed in the essay), did Synod do right in declaring them to be non-divisive of church fellowship, or did Synod do wrong?"*

We have herewith by no means exhausted the discussion of what to us seems to call for criticism in the essay at hand. But we believe that we have again shown sufficiently what confusion has been permitted entrance among us by the adoption of the St. Louis Resolutions of 1938. We believe that we have again shown how imperative it is that those resolutions be rescinded. They cannot stand.

P. H. B.

● Should We Become Fundamentalists?

There is great danger that we may become fundamentalists without realizing it.

The term "fundamentalist" involves a distinction between Scriptural doctrines. There are certain Scriptural doctrines which a sinner must know under all circumstances in order to be saved. These may be called fundamental, inasmuch as a knowledge of them is absolutely essential to the foundation ("fundament") of saving faith under all circumstances. There are other Scriptural doctrines of which believing sinners have been ignorant without losing their faith. These doctrines may be called non-fundamental, inasmuch as a knowledge of them is not absolutely essential to the foundation of saving faith under all circumstances. Under certain circumstances, as in some temptation, a "non-fundamental" doctrine of Scripture may prove to be as essential to saving faith as a "fundamental" doctrine. Fundamental doctrines are such as are absolutely essential to saving faith under **all** circumstances.

Should we become fundamentalists? A fundamentalist is a person who considers disagreement in non-fundamentals permissible in the church, and insists on agreement only in fundamentals. A fundamentalist calls anyone a brother who agrees with him in the funda-

* The essayist had emphasized that the report of our 1938 Convention Committee 16 does not say that a difference of doctrine is not divisive, but it says "it need not be divisive." But in the next moment he goes on to say that Synod declared the points noted "to be non-divisive of fellowship," thus contradicting himself also here. The argument by which he constructs "is not divisive" out of "need not be divisive" (P. 40) is as faulty as much of the other logic of this treatise, as untenable, and as unacceptable to us. We are once more moved to exclaim: what confusion is rampant in our church since 1938!

mentals, even though this "brother" disagree with him in non-fundamentals.

Should we become fundamentalists? We have not been such. In 1932 Dr. Theodore Graebner rightly stated, "Our church-body is neither Modernist nor Fundamentalist, since it accepts the Bible alone and believes that agreement in all its teachings, not only in fundamentals, is necessary for church-fellowship." (**Pastor and People**, p. 25.) In other words, our church-body has not considered disagreement even in non-fundamentals permissible in the Church.

Should we become fundamentalists? Apparently, some of our brethren think so. **The American Lutheran** recently stated, that "differences in non-fundamentals are not divisive of church-fellowship." (March, 1940, p. 28.) This is another way of saying that disagreement in non-fundamentals is permissible in the church. The quotation really describes the fundamentalist position according to which agreement only in fundamentals is necessary for church-fellowship. Without realizing it, our brethren are advocating that we become fundamentalists.*

Should we become fundamentalists? In other words, should we begin to consider disagreement in non-fundamentals permissible

in the Church? If we do, we shall first of all have to surrender the "non-fundamentals" made prominent by the "Doctrinal Basis" of 1938.* But if we surrender those non-fundamentals, we must logically surrender all non-fundamentals on request. We cannot insist on some after we have given up others in deference to the principle that "differences in non-fundamentals are not divisive of church fellowship." Having surrendered the non-fundamentals, we must logically surrender the secondary fundamentals, such as the doctrine concerning the Sacraments, since a knowledge of them is not absolutely essential to saving faith. But we cannot stop even with this. Fundamentalism leads finally to Modernism according to history, that is, to the denial of all Scriptural doctrines. It cannot be otherwise. The adoption of the fundamentalist principle involves a conscious or unconscious denial of the principle that Scripture speaks with **divine** authority. For if we need not submit to its utterances in non-fundamentals, we need not do so in fundamentals. If it does not bind us to the former, it does not bind us to the latter.

Should we become fundamentalists? To do so would be disobedience to our Lord. He has commanded us to teach "all things whatsoever" He has commanded, and "all things" include non-fundamentals. This commandment requires obedience, not only of us, but also of those whom we support and encourage in their worship and church work. Persistent fundamentalists as well as modernists must therefore be rejected and avoided by us, simply because we should not support or encourage disobedience to the Lord.

Should we become fundamentalists? If we do, we ministers of the Gospel disqualify ourselves for our office. God wants His spokesmen to be **sound** in doctrine. Titus 1, 9; 2 Tim. 3, 15-17. A fundamentalist is not sound in doctrine, and therefore has no divine right to instruct Christians or their teachers. It is for him to be sound in doctrine.

Should we become fundamentalists? If we do, we shall sin against the souls of men by depriving them of what God has intended for their souls. Acts 20, 26, 27.

We should by no means become fundamentalists, because fundamentalism is, in fine, a sin against God and men. It is a sin to extend the principle of the open forum to the field of Scriptural doctrine, to make non-fun-

* No doubt **The American Lutheran** considers its statement in harmony with Missouri's "Doctrinal Basis" of 1938. For this document, especially in the light of subsequent official statements, seems to advocate fundamentalism. In its Declaration the American Lutheran Church asked that we tolerate disagreement in certain non-fundamentals by declaring such disagreement not disruptive of church-fellowship. Our Synod replied that such disagreement need not be divisive of church-fellowship, although agreement in all doctrines should be sought. In other words, Synod has implied that while full agreement in doctrine is desirable, yet such agreement is not necessary for the establishing of church-fellowship. So our Committee on Lutheran Union understood the matter, as is clear from the following: . . . "The reply of the American Lutheran Church commissioners read thus: . . . 'While we are ready to continue the discussion of these points,' namely, certain non-fundamentals, 'certainly the erection of church-fellowship should not be made contingent on the result of these deliberations; church-fellowship is justified, and can be practiced, even if no agreement is reached on these points.' We gave our approval to this statement." (A Letter of the Committee on Lutheran Union Addressed to the Clergy of the Missouri Synod," Dec. 8, 1939, p. 5.) This, too, seems to express the fundamentalist position. It will not help matters at all to explain that by "non-fundamentals" our Synodical Resolutions mean "open questions" or "theological problems", that is, questions which are not answered in Scripture. Naturally, the fundamentalist must regard non-fundamentals as open questions or theological problems. Indeed, if Synod had been thinking of truly open question, it would hardly have urged any agreement in them in connection with the establishing of church fellowship. For according to its own Brief Statement "open questions must remain open questions." But Synod made it plain that it was not thinking of open questions or theological problems. For it adopted the report of Committee 16 which stated, "In some non-fundamental points concerning the doctrine of the Last Things the Declaration of the American Lutheran Church representatives asks tolerance for certain teachings and interpretations which have been rejected in our circles." (Synodical Proceedings, 1938, p. 229. Our emphasis.) Moreover, the Brief Statement (No. 44) declares: "Not to be included in the number of open questions are the following: The doctrine of the Church, and the Ministry, of Sunday, of Chiliasm, and of Antichrist, these doctrines being clearly defined in Scripture."

* E. g., the doctrine that all believers will be resurrected on the Last Day. For the false doctrine of a special resurrection of the martyrs before the Last Day, for which the Declaration asks toleration, makes the aforesaid doctrine an open question in practice, simply because any believer may die a martyr.

damentals of Scripture open questions or theological problems, to consider differences in non-fundamentals not divisive of church-fellowship. Our Synod is in great danger of committing that sin. Even if the Resolutions of 1938 have not committed us to fundamentalism, they have given the strong impression to many within and outside our Synod, that we are ready to become fundamentalists. The least we can now do is penitently to rescind those resolutions, expressly repudiate fundamentalism in word and deed, and wipe out its first beginnings in our Synod with the help of God.

D. L. Pfeiffer.

● What Has the Rank and File of A Church's Membership to Say?

Citing John 10, 4ff. 8; Mt. 7, 15; I Thess. 5, 21; and Mt. 24, 4ff., and warning most earnestly against the dangerous error of complacently permitting matters of doctrine to be decided by the judgment of officials, theologians, and conventions, Luther says:—

"Christ sets up a contrary rule, takes from officials, theologians, and conventions* both the right and the power to judge doctrine, and gives it to the rank and file of Christians in general . . . My dear friend, what can be said against this by such windbags as shuffle and say: 'Conventions, conventions! Ah, one must listen to the Church's theologians, its officials, its majority! One must respect established practice and custom!' Do you think that for me God's Word should give way to your established practice, custom, and officials? Nevermore! Therefore we shall let officials and conventions resolve and formulate what they will; but where we have God's Word before us, it will be for us, and not for them, to say whether it be right or wrong, and they shall give way to us and obey our word . . . Every warning which St. Paul issues, Rom. 16, 18;** I Cor. 1, 10.14; Gal. 3, 4ff.; Col. 2, 9, and everywhere; likewise all utterances of the prophets, in which they teach that doctrines of men are to be shunned—these do nothing else than that they take from teachers the right and the power to judge all teachers, and by an earnest commandment, involving loss of one's soul, place it upon the

* Thus we have rendered Luther's "Bischoefe, Lehrer, und Concilia." No one will question the propriety of this. (Cp. e.g. his use of "bishops" in the Small Catechism.)

** Luther's use of Rom. 16, 18 here, in connection with what follows, shows how far some present-day "interpreters" have departed from the plain meaning of this text and from the truly Lutheran position regarding it.

hearers; so that these not only have the right and the power to judge everything that is proclaimed, but it is their duty so to judge, lest they invite the disfavor of divine Majesty."—**That a Christian Assembly or Congregation Has the Right and Power to Judge All Doctrine and to Call, Install, and Dismiss Teachers: Ground and Reason from Scripture. 1523.** St. L. Edit., X, 1538-1549. Cp. also Walther, **The Proper Organization of a Local Ev. Luth. Congregation in a Free State**, Thesis 26: "Of a Congregation's Exercise of Its Obligation to Concern Itself as to Purity of Doctrine and of Life, and to Practice Discipline in Both Respects with regard to Its Members." Pp. 107-111. (Summary in **Walther and the Church**, C.P.H., 1938, p. 102.)

P. H. B.

● The Bible in The American Lutheran Church

The December issue of the **Journal of Theology**, organ of the American Lutheran Conference, contains an article on "Present-Day Signs of the Second Advent with Particular Reference to Trends within the Church." It is written wholly in the manner of the "scientific" theology of American Lutheranism. We are not going to discuss this article in its entirety. From beginning to end it teems with error, confusion, and doubt. We do, however, want to cite one significant sentence from it, to show how far American Lutheranism, which boldly publishes such articles, has fallen from grace.

Discussing the question of the conversion of the Jews, in accordance with its variegated conception of millenialists, the author brazenly sets himself over God, whose eternal Word does not fit into his own scheme of things, and, citing, Rom. 11, 25ff., blasphemously says: "Paul in his attempt to dispel ignorance has added confusion." (P. 365.)

Can we believe our eyes, as we read this?!

The author of the article in question is listed among the clergy of the American Lutheran Church in the latest (1941) edition of the Lutheran Almanac and Year-Book of that church-body. Since 1938 many have been led to believe that agreement, sufficient doctrinal agreement for union, has finally come about between that Church and our own. It was all a dreadful mistake. There was no such agreement, even as respects the most important Christian doctrines, in 1938. There is no such agreement now. We rather seem, alas, to be drifting farther and farther apart. This

ought to be clear from this latest instance of "American Lutheran" theology.

God speed the day when our acceptance of the untenable 1938 Union Articles, looking toward fellowship with the A.L.C., shall be rescinded.

P. H. B.

❶ 'In the Light of Our Declaration

"We believe that the Brief Statement viewed in the light of our Declaration is not in contradiction to the Minneapolis Theses." These words of the Sandusky Resolutions have often been quoted as meaning that according to the A.L.C. the Brief Statement is to be interpreted according to their Declaration. This is, of course, implied in the words.

But there is still another consideration of vital importance which must not be overlooked. The words also imply that without the Declaration, **the Minneapolis Theses are in contradiction to the Brief Statement.** And this is really the case.

The Minneapolis Theses know only a justification **on account** of the imputation of the righteousness of Christ **by faith** (Cp. Doctrinal Declarations p. 22); and they contain an antithesis directed against the doctrine of the Synodical Conference. This antithesis condemns all teaching "which directly or indirectly would conflict with the order of salvation and would not give to all an equally great opportunity of salvation." (P. 23.) It has always been contended by the synods which now constitute the A.L.C. that whoever teaches an equally evil conduct of those who are converted and those who are lost **"indirectly denies" the universal grace and a real opportunity of salvation to all.** The A.L.C. sees in dissimilar conduct the only possibility of holding fast a universal and resistible grace.

The Brief Statement, on the other hand, (although teaching a resistible grace) **rejects** the dissimilar conduct, and hence falls under the condemnation of the Minneapolis Theses. But the A. L. C. Declaration nicely bridges the gulf by stressing the resistibility of grace; for, according to its way of thinking, this saves the dissimilar conduct which in turn is meant to save the universality of grace.

Incidentally the statement that all men have an "equally great opportunity of salvation" is contrary to Scripture. The men of Capernaum had a greater opportunity than those of Nineveh, and the people of Jerusalem than those of Sodom.

Now the Minneapolis Theses **are and remain part of the doctrinal platform of the**

A.L.C. Therefore, beware of "the light of our Declaration!" It tries to harmonize contradicting confessions and turns our endeavors to reach an understanding with the A.L.C. into a unionistic affair.

J. B.

❷ The Question of Honesty in the Lutheran Union Movement

The question of honesty has often been raised in the present union movement, not so much by us but rather by our critics. We grant that this question may be to the point in any controversy, and particularly in a controversy where as much is at stake as is the case in the present union movement. We shall therefore call attention to just one matter, for the present, in which those who hold a different view from ours in the present union movement can and by all means should be called upon to demonstrate their honesty.

We are referring to a very vital mis-statement of fact in Dr. Reu's essay "Toward Lutheran Unity," which has been published and widely disseminated by the American Lutheran Church throughout the Lutheran Church in America. Dr. Reu has mistakenly claimed, in the pamphlet named, that Dr. Walther championed the view that we certainly must not be agreed on doctrines of non-fundamental importance. In the August issue of **The Confessional Lutheran** we have very plainly and conclusively shown that Dr. Reu and the American Lutheran Church are mistaken in disseminating such views and making them the basis of an appeal for union, also among Missourians. We did not question Dr. Reu's honesty, nor that of the American Lutheran Church. We questioned only their scholarship. We believe that they are **honestly** mistaken. However, now that we have shown that to be the case, we do expect to see a public correction of this error. Honesty now compels it. A marked copy of **The Confessional Lutheran** has gone to Dr. Reu's address. At a recent conference we asked Dr. Reu privately what his reaction was. He admitted "there is a difference" between what Walther actually said and what he has been represented as having said by Dr. Reu in the official and important publication of the A.L.C., "In the Interest of Lutheran Unity," to which we have referred. Will Dr. Reu and the American Lutheran Church now be honest enough to admit their error publicly and to correct it, since it is of such importance in the present union movement? (We have heard just this misrepresentation of Dr. Walther

referred to time and again at conferences as a mistaken basis for an appeal for union.) This is a legitimate question, a vital question, a question that demands an answer now. We await the answer to that question. It will show the honesty of our critics.

Incidentally, should we not expect to see such important mistaken claims as this one repudiated by our own leaders if they wish to retain the confidence of others in their competence to lead us in the right direction in the present union discussions?

P. H. B.

● Walther's Theses on the Modern Theory Of Open Questions

(Continued)

Thesis VI

"Even errors concerning non-fundamental or also secondary fundamental articles of faith which are found in the writings of **sainted acknowledged orthodox teachers** do not yet stamp these as false teachers and do not deprive them of the reputation of orthodoxy."

The emphasis in the above thesis is on **"these teachers,"** to whom reference is made. Their case is not to be made a criterion for others.

What Walther means to say here, in the first place, is this that while even past recognized Lutheran teachers have erred, there are mitigating circumstances in their case which still enable us to think of them as orthodox teachers; but that **this fact is not to be misused by us, and, by a process of generalization and other specious argumentation, to be made a basis for leegitimizing doctrinal indifference in the Church.**

Walther calls attention to the fact that the Iowa Synod, for instance, in an endeavor to justify its adherence to the false modern theory of open questions by reference to the blemishes of past acknowledged orthodox teachers, made a formal business of uncovering all weaknesses in the writings of these fathers which they could spy, these teachers seeming to exist for them for the sole purpose of demonstrating how far one may depart from the Scriptures without forfeiting one's reputation of orthodoxy and confessional faithfulness, and not for the purpose of drawing true theological wisdom from their writings.

To let Walther speak for himself, he says: "We, on the contrary, declare, that our esteemed Lutheran teachers were of course also men, who could therefore err and who actu-

ally did err in one and another respect. But what was done of them in weakness, and hence was forgiven them, must not now . . . be by us deliberately and therefore in a condemnable way misused toward doctrinal indifference, but should be shunned and used for the purpose of becoming all the more wary, all the more free from every idolatrous trusting in men, and though they be the most respected, learned, and pious men, and to become ever more vividly conscious of the fact that Scripture alone is the wholly pure fountain-source of truth, 'the sole rule and norm according to which all teachings and teachers alike are to be judged and estimated, other writings, however, of teachers both patristic and more recent (sive Patrum sive Neotericorum scripta), whatever name they may bear, should not be regarded as equal to the Scriptures, but are all of them to be subjected one like another to the same.' (Beginning of the Formula of Concord.) While the old faithful teachers of our Church are, therefore, in other respects our teachers, they are, as respects their faltering, signals of warning to us, in keeping with the familiar maxim: **'Lapsus maiorum sit tremor minorum.'** that is to say, let the stumbling of greater ones serve to make lesser one tremble." **Lehre und Wehre, XIV, p. 236.**

Walther further warns: "One may here well further point out the fact that there are **not a few** points of doctrine, and very important points of doctrine, with regard to which something erroneous is to be discovered in some writing of some otherwise orthodox teacher; for which reason appeal to the deviations of those who may in other respects be orthodox, for the purpose of vindicating the theory of open questions necessarily leads to complete annihilation of all doctrinal purity and unity." **Loc. cit., p. 239.**

Walther also adds: "No doubt attention is furthermore to be called to the fact that when orthodox teachers of note of a past better generation became guilty of some deviation, this usually occurred without there being anyone to notice it or to have the courage to gainsay so noted a teacher." **Loc. cit.**

For this reason, Walther says: "As little as our fathers wanted to make heretics of the Church Fathers when they denounced errors of the Papists which these tried to make attractive by an appeal to the Fathers; just so little do we, by rejecting some error in a contemporary, want to condemn and make heretics of those fathers thereby, because they, without having their attention drawn to it, and therefore out of weakness and not

from stiffneckedness, entertained the same error." *Loc. cit.*, p. 235.

Walther did not mean to say that since this or that teacher once taught so or so, without being declared a heretic or denied church-fellowship in his day, therefore also contemporary teachers of the Church must be allowed the liberty to deviate from the Word of God in the same point, without being charged with heresy or schismaticism and having the hand of fellowship and the right to teach in the orthodox church denied him. (This has always been the specious argument of the Iowa Synod, as Walther points out, as it is of the present-day A.L.C.) *Cp. Loc. cit.*, p. 233.

"It is indeed a disagreeable task," says Walther, "to prove to Protestants, Lutherans, and indeed to men who want to be Scriptural theologians *par-excellence*, the futility of this prop of the theory of open questions." Such an argument, he rightly points out, as that of the false open question theory advocates we may well leave to Rome. "Or," he asks, "was it indeed not permissible for Papists to appeal to the errors of the Church Fathers who are recognized in all Christendom as orthodox teachers, aye, as luminaries in the Church and as pillars of the same, but dare Lutherans on the other hand appeal to the errors of orthodox Lutheran teachers for a similar purpose?" *Loc. cit.*, p. 234.

Walther points out that nothing less than the main principle of Protestantism is at stake in this question. He therefore rightly says: "Let Iowan gentlemen,*** whenever they are

put to it because of their unionistic theory of open questions continue to be immediately at hand with some *naevus* (imperfection, blemish) of our old, highly honored orthodox teachers; let them e.g. as respects the doctrine of Sunday which they have learned to know as a Scriptural doctrine ask to have it regarded and treated as an open question, particularly, as they say, because Gerhard erred in regard to it—we shall as good Protestants declare to them over and over again: *Amicus Plato, amicus Socrates, amicus Lutherus, amicus Gerhardus, sed magis amica veritas, magis amica Scriptura sacra*, yes, with St. Paul and all Apostles: 'But though we, or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel to you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed!' Gal. 1, 8." *Loc. cit.*, p. 240.

Walther rightly insists that we prove ourselves true children of the Reformation if we neither permit the aberrations of the dogmaticians among our Lutheran fathers to be made a rule of faith, nor to be made a charter for error contrary to God's Word. For in that case we are merely following their own example and precept. Not only are we then dealing with them as they dealt with the Church Fathers, but we are then, moreover, following their express direction, not to place them and their writings above Christ and God's Word, but to prove all things and to hold fast that which is good." *Loc. cit.*, p. 235.

Walther also rightly calls attention to the fact that it might be well to show that times arise during which, because of the encroachment of corruption, it is more important and necessary than at other times and under other circumstances to rebuke even the slightest de-

stated to have dropped its doctrine of open questions. Walther's essay represents the outcome of that colloquy. Walther and his colleagues had to continue to testify against Iowa's false open question theory to their dying day, as did Pieper and others, down to our own time. Our synod's historic position over against the mistaken Iowan-A.L.C. view is also embodied in the Brief Statement. The "doctrinal basis for future church-fellowship between the Missouri Synod and the American Lutheran Church" embodied in the St. Louis Union Resolutions of 1938 (General Proceedings, 1938, p. 231) represents a complete emasculation of our Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod of 1932 which Dr. F. Pfotenhauer has called Dr. Pieper's "legacy to our Synod" (Foreword to Brief Statement, p. 3), and of the historical and Scripturally correct position of our Synod throughout its first one hundred years. The purpose of our present testimony is to gain brethren to confess with us the truth which our fathers confessed, and, on the basis of it, work with us in the only proper way toward gaining others for it, instead of declaring departures from it non-divisive, and in a mistaken zeal for an un-Scriptural and therefore unacceptable union even defaming those who would contend for it as "schismatics" and "separatists", with an actual mistaken appeal to Walther for such defamation. (Lutheran Witness, Aug. 6, 1940, p. 275.) The Confessional Lutheran is added in the article of true church-fellowship.

*** Walther's express reference to Iowa has been expunged in this passage in the translation of his essay which appeared in the Concordia Theological Monthly last year, in which his words are simply made to read: "Let men continue etc." C.T.M., Oct., 1939, p. 235. We can conceive of no excuse for this which might be honored by us under the present circumstances. Honesty and the great cause of the truth that is at stake in the present controverted union movement compel us to say that more than just the scholarship of the C.T.M. is involved and at fault here. We have pointed out elsewhere that this is not the only instance in which such vital references to the unionistic Iowa-A.L.C. theory of open, non-divisive questions has been omitted in the C.T.M. translation of Walther's essay.

Despite Walther's repeated and emphatically insistent express testimony to the contrary, one of the leaders in our present movement toward union with the A. L. C. and other Lutherans on the unacceptable basis of the untenable St. Louis Resolutions of 1938 has ventured the absurd contention that "demonstrably the Iowa Synod dropped this doctrine [its false doctrine of open questions] in 1867."!!! *Cp.* "In the Interest of Fairness and Truth," The Confessional Lutheran, July, 1940, p. 48. Also, Lutheran Witness, June 25, 1940, p. 223: "The resolutions of 1938 so far as open questions are concerned merely stated what was on record since 1867."!!! The mistaken contention of the Lutheran Witness, and the fearful confusion which is at the bottom of it and which has now been so widely disseminated through the publicity which the Lutheran Witness receives, will be discussed more fully at a later time. In the meanwhile it is to be borne in mind that Walther's classic essay on "The False Props of the Modern Theory of Open Questions," in which he polemicized so severely and effectively against the Iowa Synod was published in 1867—a year after the colloquy between Walther and Iowa representatives, in which Iowa's mistaken view

violation in some certain point of doctrine, etc." (Loc. cit., p. 239.) To which we may add that we are facing exactly such a time and such circumstances today. References: **Lehre und Wehre**, XIV, p. 233-240. (**C.T.M.**, X, 10, p. 752-759.)

A proper consideration of this thesis leaves no room for the false modern theory of open, non-divisive questions in the field of Scriptural, Christian doctrine. On the contrary, it demands denunciation of it.

(To be continued)

P. H. B.

☉ Reason or Revelation

Dr. Th. Engelder, in the current issues of the **Concordia Theological Monthly**, is presenting a series of articles entitled "Reason or Revelation?" Especially the installments in the September and October issues strike at the heart of the differences among the Lutherans of America. Perhaps the concluding article will get more directly demonstrate how we ourselves "are prone to rationalistic thinking" in the current theological discussions which are being carried on with the American Lutheran Church.

It is not enough to hear a profession of the *Sola Scriptura** principle. It is not even enough to hear any one profess that he accepts the doctrine of verbal inspiration. Lutheran colloquists have done that in the current union discussions and yet at the same time revealed themselves as belonging to those harmonizing theologians whom Dr. Engelder so mercilessly but justly flays in the current issues of our **C. T. M.**

One risks the displeasure of many in referring to things which were stated or written more than ten years ago. But when they are as up-to-date as the following, surely a good purpose is served in publishing them. Dr. Stellanor at an Intersynodical meeting in Detroit, Mich., in which Dr. F. Pieper presented our side of the subject under discussion, said: "The Christian doctrines form for the believer, especially for the theologian, a recognizable harmonious whole or system, which is taken out of the fully clear passages of Holy Writ, and amalgamated. This organic whole is the highest norm for Scripture interpretation, even above parallelism, or, the comparison of the various passages which treat of one doctrine; in other words; it forms the analogy of faith." (**Unterscheidungslehren**, p. 48.)*

* It is to be noted that, aside from other considerations, the whole Bible is not the organic foundation of faith according to this definition!—P. H. B.

In the **C. T. M.**, Nov. 1939, pp. 864ff., we have a report from Australia concerning church-fellowship discussions over there. According to it, our Australian brethren were obliged to object to a "**twofold principle of Scripture interpretation**," which holds **Scripture and faith** must be used in interpreting Scripture. Here in America at least one District Conference, after discussing such matters as these at several intersynodical meetings, concluded that there is no agreement with it and the spokesmen of the A.L.C. in the same section. And the present writer cannot conclude anything else but that there is very definitely a fundamental difference between the A.L.C. and us in regard to the Scripture. All of the above references can serve very well in application of what our eminent Dr. Engelder is writing about in the current issues of the **C. T. M.**

Any pastor knows that there are many who loudly claim that they have the *Sola Scriptura* principle, also outside of the Lutheran Church. But in applying Scripture or in explaining it, they use their reason. They may call it faith; but it is reason.

The Confessional Lutheran has done well in bringing to its readers much discussion of the issues concerning non-fundamentals and open questions in theology. The aberrations and errors which the current union discussions have revealed concerning these two points show the interested and orthodox Lutheran how reason has been given a voice in coming to conclusions.

But who will listen? By God's grace there will be some. And he who writes like Dr. Engelder, truly making the Scriptures the sole foundation, strengthens himself and his brethren. We make peace, we arrive at unity, only by cutting down reason with the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God..

On the cover of our **C. T. M.** there is printed the passage, "If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to battle?" Related to that is the truth that if we give a diplomatic testimony which is prompted by our own reason, we will only harm the cause of greater Lutheran unity in America.

G. Schweikert.

**ACCEPTANCE OF THE ST. LOUIS
UNION ARTICLES OF 1938 MUST
BE RESCINDED**

THE CONFESSIONAL LUTHERAN

Published In The Interest Of Ecumenical Lutheranism

MOTTO: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."--1 Cor. 1, 10.

REV. PAUL H. BURGDORF
Editor, Clinton, Iowa

REV. J. BUENGER
Assistant Editor

REV. C. M. GULLERUD
Contributing Editor

REV. ARTHUR E. BECK, Business Manager, Foley, Minnesota

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MARCH, 1941

NO. 3

IN THIS ISSUE:—The Position of the Missouri Synod.—Dr. Reu on the St. Louis Union Resolutions of 1938.—A Question for Committee 16.—The Official Reply of the A.L.C.—A Lutheran School Teacher Speaks His Mind.—What Are the Facts?—A Unionistic Approach.—The Attitude of Our Clergy.—From Our Mail Bag.—Contemplating the Future.—Christian Patience.

● The Position of the Missouri Synod With Regard to Church-Fellowship In 1918

"The position of the Missouri Synod with regard to Christian fellowship was clearly stated some years ago by a General Synod writer as follows: 'There are those who would only fellowship if they were convinced of agreement in all points of doctrine given in the Bible.* This is Missouri's position and in loyalty to the Scriptures they make us respect and honor them.' (Luth. Quarterly, 1915, p. 252.)

"To quote one of our own men:** 'False doctrine is sin. Every contamination with false doctrine is not only an intellectual shortcoming, but a moral enormity.' (Theol. Quarterly, III, p. 393.) 'Christ never intended or sanctioned a diversity of doctrine in His Church. He says, **If ye continue in my Word, then are ye my disciples indeed**, and when He charges His Church, **You teach all nations to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you**, He will have His Church be and remain an orthodox Church (adhering in all

points to Scriptural doctrine***) in all lands and to the end of time. It is the duty of every Christian to keep aloof from, and avoid, all fellowship and cooperation with heterodox churches (those harboring error***). (P. 400.) 'If there be those who will not continue in Christ's Word, and refuse to teach and observe what Christ has commanded us, their fellowship must not be sought, but avoided. **A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject** (Tit. 3, 10);**** **neither be partaker of other men's sins** (1 Tim. 5, 22). There can be no conscientious compromise with error without a corresponding denial of truth; and error must not be defended and promoted, but abandoned and combated. When Christ says, **For this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth**, it will not do to say with Pilate, **What is truth?**' (VI, p. 15.)

"Unionism is joint worship and union for work without unity of faith. It is based upon indifference to the truth, and is a compromise with false prophets."—Th. Graebner, **The Merger: An Analysis. (Taking Cognizance of Overtures to the Un-merged.) Being a Reprint of a Series of Articles in LUTHERAN WITNESS, 1918.** P. H. B.

*Our emphasis.

** The quotations which here follow, are not reproduced in their entirety as they originally appeared in the Theological Quarterly. There are omissions which are not indicated. But the quotations are otherwise correct in every detail.

*** These excellent parenthetic remarks were supplied to the quoted articles as footnotes by Prof. Theo. Graebner. It is to be noted that they rightly identify the true Christ of God as One who demands agreement with the Holy Scriptures in all points of doctrine, and leave no room for the harboring of error.

**** It is interesting to note this correct application of Tit. 3, 10.

● Dr. Reu on the St. Louis Union Resolutions of 1938

As is well known, Dr. M. Reu, leading theologian of the American Lutheran Church, was perhaps the leading member of the commission of that Church which negotiated an agreement with the Missouri Synod's Committee on Lutheran Union in 1938, on which agreement the St. Louis Union Resolutions of that year were subsequently based.* At an intersynodical conference between pastors of the ALC and of the Missouri Synod, held at Rochelle, Ill., on Oct. 28, Dr. Reu made a most important statement regarding the implications of the adoption of the St. Louis Resolutions which were in good part written by himself, by the 1938 convention of the Missouri Synod. Dr. Reu's statement was reported in the December issue of **The Confessional Lutheran**. In view of its vital importance, we requested, from Dr. Reu himself, a verification of his statement as reported in our journal. Our request and Dr. Reu's reply are reproduced herewith:

Jan. 20, 1941

"My dear Doctor Reu:

"At our Rochelle, Ill., conference on Oct. 28, you made a statement, in closing, which I took down in the original German in which it was uttered at the time, and which I have translated as follows:

"Through the adoption of the St. Louis Resolutions of 1938 it has become clear that Missouri no longer holds the position formerly held by it, according to which one can demand complete doctrinal agreement. Brethren, you are not one yourself. Away with that terrible spectre!"

"I would appreciate it very much if you will assure me whether this is a correct rendering of your statement. I might say that I find no fault with this statement. On the contrary, I am convinced that you were justified in making it both in view of the St. Louis Resolutions of 1938 and on the basis of discussions at Rochelle. All that I am asking for is a verification of the correctness of the statement as I have rendered it, and I wish to assure you that I shall appreciate this very much.

Very truly yours,
Paul H. Burgdorf."

Replying under post date of Jan. 24, Dr.

Reu wrote us:**

"Dear Pastor:

"I think you have reproduced correctly the sentences which I spoke. However, the statements expressed at that time, could, according to the context of which they were a part, have reference only to non-fundamental articles. This you should, therefore add, if you wish to reproduce what was said rightly. The last sentence, 'Away with etc.' I do not remember.

With due respect,

M. Reu."
—P. H. B.

● A Question For Committee 16

Our Missouri Synod's Convention Committee No. 16 (the Committee on Intersynodical and Doctrinal Matters) states that the **Declaration** of the American Lutheran Church Representatives "repudiates chiliasm." (**Proceedings of the 37th General Convention, 1938, p. 230.**)

Where, we ask, does the said document do this? We find nothing of the sort in the said document. On the contrary, we find that the American Lutheran Church in the **Declaration** of its Representatives specifically provides room for chiliasm, even as it does in its affiliation with avowed chiliasts.

The report of our Convention Committee states: that the **Declaration** of the Representatives of the American Lutheran Church "repudiates chiliasm by emphasizing that the Church will continue to be a kingdom of the cross to the end." (Ibid.) Where, we again ask, does the said document do this? We do not find that the **Declaration** of the A. L. C. Representatives emphasizes anywhere what Committee 16 says it emphasizes. On the contrary, we find that it specifically emphasizes, in contrast to our own Brief Statement, "that the Church on earth until the return of Christ, will be a kingdom of the cross." (Loc. cit., p. 224. Our emphasis.) That, is exactly, what chiliasts believe! Far from repudiating chiliasm, the **Declaration** of the A. L. C. Representatives, therefore, makes room for it. Its statements are in perfect harmony with the expectations of chiliasts.

On the basis of the above mistaken, erroneous claim, Committee 16 concluded that "in

** "Werter Herr Pastor!—Ich denke, Sie geben die von mir gesprochenen Sätze richtig wieder. Bloss konnten sich die damals gemachten Aussagen nach dem Zusammenhang, in dem sie sich befanden, nur auf non-fundamental articles beziehen; das sollten Sie daran hinzufügen, wenn Sie das Gesagte richtig wiedergeben wollen. Der letzte Satz: Away with etc., is mir nicht in Erinnerung.—Mit gebührender Hochachtung, M. Reu."

* Proceedings 37th Regular Convention, p. 227ff.

all other points of our teachings concerning the last times" (except the well-known four points, regarding an expected millennium, a still future Antichrist, a general conversion of the Jews, and a physical resurrection of martyrs before Judgement Day; all of which the A. L. C., in the interest of its insistence on the toleration of chiliasm, asked the Missouri Synod to declare not disruptive of church-fellowship) "the American Lutheran Church Representatives agree with us." (Loc. cit., p. 230.) And on the basis of such palpably erroneous assumptions, Committee 16 declared in general at St. Louis in 1938: "Your Committee finds in the position of the representatives of the American Lutheran Church a) first of all an agreement in the doctrinal statements concerning teachings disputed in the past or still in debate in some sections of the Lutheran Church of America." (Loc. cit., p. 228.) On the basis of this report the 1938 convention of the Missouri Synod accepted the resolutions of that year as embodying "the doctrinal basis for **future church-fellowship** between the Missouri Synod and the American Lutheran Church." (P. 23.) The **Lutheran Witness** in its eagerness for such fellowship has gone even further and has very emphatically declared the said basis to be a "sufficient" doctrinal basis for union!

What a fatal mistake!

We are, of course, by no means charging Committee 16 or anyone else with wilful misrepresentation. Nothing could be further from our mind. The mistakes of this committee and of the 1938 convention were no doubt wholly unintended. Nor are we at all interested in attaching blame to anyone for the serious mistakes which have been made. We are well aware that Committee 16 and the 1938 convention of our synod simply undertook too much in attempting to consider and pass on the complicated document which was submitted to them in connection with the 1938 convention. The document should first have been submitted to the rank and file of our clergy and our laity and their counsel sought in the matter. For certainly our officials and committees have confidence in the pastors and congregations who called them to be their servants!

But the net result of the transactions of our 1938 Convention remains in any case the same. We are now confronted by the cold fact that we have accepted a unionistic document that leaves room for chiliasm, among other things, on the tolerance of which the American Lutheran Church and its chief predecessor, the Iowa Synod, have always insisted, in accordance with their false modernistic theory

of open questions, on which the record is clear all through the years, ridiculous, contrary claims of the ill-informed editors of the **Lutheran Witness** notwithstanding.

Who can fail to see this?

In submitting this question to Committee 16, we submit it as but one example of the fact that the 1938 Resolutions on Union were not based on **realism**. They were based upon an unwarranted optimism and upon merely "apparent" agreement, as even the chairman of our Synod's Committee on Lutheran Union has recently admitted. We, moreover, submit this question as openly as the untenable Report of Committee 16 and the whole of the resolutions of 1938 have been submitted to us, in the well-meant but vain expectation that we should accept them. But, above all, we submit this question to our brethren, with the earnest plea that they join us in insisting on rescission of the untenable and unacceptable resolutions of 1938.

—P. H. B.

⑤ **The Official Reply of the American Lutheran Church to the Union Committee of the Missouri Synod**

Upon the request of the Fellowship Committee of the American Lutheran Church, the Missouri Committee on Lutheran Union drew up a formal Statement pointing out factors which in their opinion still prevent the establishment of church-fellowship between the two church-bodies. At its Convention at Detroit, Oct. 10-17, the A. L. C. adopted a reply to the differences which had been called to their attention. Since these documents have now been made public both through the columns of the **Kirchliche Zeitschrift** and the **C. T. M.** Since the official reply of the A. L. C. was made in order to answer certain objections which have been raised in connection with Union Documents and developments related to the Union movement, it becomes the duty of all who desire a true basis for union to study these documents, to see whether their objections have been removed by the explanations which have been made. Permit us to present, for the earnest consideration of our readers, our reactions to the answers which have been given.

I. Subjective and Objective Justification

To the objections raised against the phrase "God purposes to justify those that have come to faith", the A. L. C. gives the following answer:

"Concerning the first point, we are surprised that the sentence, 'God purposes to justify those that have come to faith', could be so wrongly construed as 'implying an assumption of an interval between the creation of faith and the justifying act of God.' We say with our commissioners: 'Justification takes place, of course, in the same moment in which man comes to faith.'" **Kirchliche Zeitschrift, p. 693.**

To this answer of the A. L. C. we shall have to say as Flacius said to Major (Trigl., Hist., Introd., p. 119): that the A. L. C. must choose between their proposition or the interpretation they have placed upon it; for the former does not admit of the latter. In other words, we expect that the A. L. C. will change their proposition so that it will say what they now say that it means.

Furthermore, to the objections that their proposition as it now stands, implies a denial of the teaching that God has purposed to justify **all men**, the A. L. C. answers as follows:

"Concerning the so-called objective or universal justification, we state that we adhere to this doctrine **without excluding, however the declarative nature of the individual justification in the moment of faith, of which the Scriptures speak so often.**" (K. Z., p. 693) (The emphasis is our own. Note particularly here that the words emphasized by us are not found in the Commissioners' explanation but were added by the body in session.)

This answer does not settle the difference between us but rather makes it more evident and pronounced. On the basis of a study of earlier and more recent writings emanating within the A. L. C. we have contended that there has been current among them an erroneous commingling of objective and subjective Justification. Our complaint has been that the subjective Justification which occurs in the moment of faith, has been **included** by them in the doctrine of universal justification. We have always held that it is impossible to teach the doctrine of justification correctly when "the declarative nature of the individual justification in the moment of faith" is erroneously commingled with God's justification of the whole world; for God's universal or objective justification refers alike to those who do not come to faith and those who do come to faith, and remains an accomplished fact whether it is believed or not, whether it is accepted by faith or not. In examining our Bible proofs for Objective Justification (II Cor. 5, 19; Rom. 5, 18-19; Is. 53, 11; Rom 4, 25), one does not find that "the declarative nature of

the individual justification in the moment of faith" is there included. Dr. Pieper says: "Reconciliation is complete as far as God's disposition is concerned; in God's heart the forgiveness of sins has been substituted for the imputation of sins. However, reconciliation is complete also with regard to its **external scope**, for it embraces the whole world." (**What is Christianity?**, p. 63. For further study read Stoeckhardt's Roemerbrief, pp. 275 and 280, and the Synodical Conference Essay of 1872 under Thesis Four.) But now we hear the A. L. C. saying that they adhere to the doctrine of objective justification, "Without excluding, however, the declarative nature of the individual justification in the moment of faith." If we were dealing with such as had not been confusing and erroneously commingling objective and subjective justification in the past, we might put a different construction on what the A. L. C. is here saying, but since they have been confusing these two doctrines and since we have no proof that they have retracted or repudiated this error, therefore we are forced to the conclusion that they are here saying the same thing which they have been saying in the past.

Summary: We shall not be satisfied with the Declaration's statement on Justification until it is changed so as to include a correct statement on Objective Justification (which it now lacks) and so as to state the doctrine of subjective justification (which it now states incorrectly) in Scripturally correct language.

II. Non-Fundamental Doctrines

From many quarters of our Synod were heard objections to this Sandusky Resolution: "We are firmly convinced that it is neither necessary nor possible to agree in all non-fundamental doctrines." To these objections the A. L. C. answers:

"Concerning the second point — misgivings about several items in our Sandusky resolutions — we declare: 'Recent events prove that in the interest of a correct understanding of the St. Louis resolutions of 1938, it was necessary to include in our resolutions a statement like this: 'We are firmly convinced that it is neither necessary nor possible to agree in all non-fundamental doctrines.' We declare with our Commissioners and say: 'To be sure everything that Scriptures teach is God's Word and therefore binding.' However, for clarity's sake we add: 'Not every traditional explanation of a Scriptural statement is binding. The traditional explanation may not be the sense intended by the Holy Ghost and there-

fore may make further study under His guidance necessary; and, since human short-sightedness and sin may preclude the finding of the universal acceptance of the divinely intended sense, we thank God that it is not necessary for establishment of Church Fellowship to agree in every explanation of a Scriptural statement'." (K. Z., p. 693.)

Here again we note that the objectionable resolution is **not retracted** but is merely explained, and the explanation is far from being satisfactory. In the first place we ask: what recent events made it necessary to include this statement in their Sandusky Resolutions? This is made clear from the words of their commissioners on this point: "The statement was included in our Sandusky resolutions because point 3 of the St. Louis Resolutions could be understood as meaning that for the time being the Declaration given was sufficient and disagreement in those well-known points was to be tolerated, but that actual establishment of church-fellowship cannot take place until agreement even in those points was reached. While we are ready to continue the discussion of these points certainly the erection of church-fellowship should not be made contingent on the result of these deliberations; church fellowship is justified and can be practiced even if no agreement is reached on these points." (K. Z., p. 690-691.)

To this it may be said that it is true that there have been those who believed there must be agreement also in the well-known points termed 'Non-Fundamental' in the St. Louis Articles of Union, and it is furthermore true that there are those who still believe this. Yes, there are those who are still saying with Dr. Stoeckhardt: "Even though some doctrines are farther removed from the center of faith than others, yet all doctrines belong within the compass of saving faith. **And we, of course, demand unity in the whole sphere of doctrine, Scriptural doctrine, as a prerequisite of church-fellowship.**" (The emphasis is our own.) (L. u. W., 50, p. 441.) Since there are those who are still saying this, it may easily be seen that the A.L.C. explanation on this point does not remove the objections which have been raised, but rather brings them out into the clear, so that all may see that our misgivings have been fully justified. Matters are not helped any by the A.L.C. Statement: "Everything that Scriptures teach is God's Word and therefore binding", when they fail to make the proper application of this truth. How they fail in making the proper application of this truth is illustrated well in their position on the doctrine of the essence of

the Church, the Anti-Christ, the conversion of the Jews, the physical resurrection of the martyrs, and the reign of a thousand years. The A.L.C. way out of this dilemma is to say: "Not every traditional explanation of a Scriptural statement is binding." This does not clear up the matter, for what they are regarding merely as a question of interpretation, we are regarding as **doctrine** clearly defined in Scripture, and therefore binding.

With regard to the last statement of the A.L.C. reply at this point let us say that we believe that the Holy Ghost is able to overcome our human short-sightedness and sin so that we may find the divinely intended sense of Scripture. When Christ tells us that if we continue in His Word we shall know the truth, He is not speaking an empty, meaningless Word. When He warns against the small leaven of false doctrine, he is not warning against something which we shall be unable to recognize.

We shall in our next issue discuss two further matters that are contained in the reply of the American Lutheran Church to the Committee on Lutheran Union of the Missouri Synod, namely,—the question of the Minneapolis Theses and the A.L.C. basis for union, and the question of the Pittsburgh Agreement.

C. M. G.

◎ A Lutheran School Teacher Speaks His Mind on a News Dispatch

Under the heading, "Missouri Synod Pledges Aid to Lutheran Unity," the Associated Press carried the following item on January 22:—

"Missouri Lutheran Synod, its membership heretofore a separate church unit, has pledged co-operation to the National Lutheran Council to further church unity in the face of the international crisis, it was announced today.

"Dr. E. E. Ryden of Rock Island, Ill., president of the American Lutheran Conference, told delegates to the annual meeting of the Lutheran Council that an agreement was reached here Monday at a meeting with Missouri Synod representatives.

"Osborne Hauge, Lutheran Council secretary, said the Synod spokesmen expressed willingness to cooperate in foreign mission enterprises, aid in army camp work, and suggested future conferences to establish a basis for Lutheran unity."

While this item may leave some room for doubt as to its correct understanding, it does not leave us without apprehension, in view of the fact that recent events have made it quite clear that a true Christian Union between the Missouri Synod and other bodies, represented in the National Lutheran Council, is not possible at this time.

The truly Lutheran position of our Church in such matters as that under discussion was stated clearly and correctly by Dr. Theo. Graebner in 1918, as follows:—

"The confessional principle, if it has any signification at all, demands a **clean** unity and a **clean** separation. All cooperation even within the province of missionary work is a spurious unity, unless there be harmony in doctrine. All such unions militate against the Word of God and the truth."* (**The Merger: An Analysis.** Taking Cognizance of Overtures to the Un-Merged. C.P.H., 1918, p. 23.)

The present "international crisis", great as it is, does not justify our resorting to unionism on a basis displeasing to God in order to insure the continued existence and effectiveness of the Church.

No matter what trials and temptations may beset us Christians, as individuals or as a church, God is faithful, who will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it. I Cor. 10, 13. If we see to it that we through diligent use of the Gospel retain true faith and thus remain members of the invisible Church, we need fear no combination of circumstances, no matter how menacing they may appear to be. Increasing the numerical strength of the visible church by means of a union effected by denial of Scriptural truths which we have learned, will not preserve us in the face of an "international crisis." This will rather be done by a heeding of the Scriptural injunction to continue in the things we have learned and have been assured of, knowing of whom we have learned them. II Tim. 3, 14. Then, no matter how large or small our number, Christ assures us: "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Luke 12, 32.

Let us not be unduly alarmed by any "international crisis." For we have not lost our faith in the great Christian hope which our Lord has given us—that of His glorious appearing.

* Prof. Graebner witnessing against the unionism prevalent in the General Council, was quoting a pamphlet written twenty years earlier by Rev. H. Offerman and directed against the unionistic Luther League. "Such truly Lutheran testimony," he rightly stated, "was impatiently heard and soon forgotten."

Just when things begin to look unbearable, we should most certainly look for the fulfillment of the promise of the glorious coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. We should learn to say: "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair." II Cor. 4, 8.

We do not believe that the survival of the Church demands rushing into unionism displeasing to God.

Richard Bendick

● What Are the Facts?

As is intimated by the author of the preceding article, press reports are often enough not wholly reliable. It is not said, therefore, that the substance of the press report which is discussed in that article is correct. This press report does, however, illustrate a type of publicity that the Missouri Synod is receiving, which is highly undesirable and detrimental to our cause. And the observations of Mr. Bendick are in any case very much in place.

In the latest **Clergy Bulletin** of the Missouri Synod, President Behnken states: "That Associated Press report relative to the Missouri Synod's cooperating with the Lutheran World Conference is a perversion of facts. The facts are that the Missouri Synod will take over some definite fields and dispense through its own men in or near these fields its own funds. In the near future the needs of these fields will be made known to you."

On the other hand, there can hardly be any doubt as to how the American Lutheran Church views this matter and what its intentions are, as is also shown elsewhere in this issue. In an article, titled "Which Way Lies Union?" in which issue is taken with the article, "The Prospects for Lutheran Union" in the Dec 10, 1940, issue of the **Lutheran Witness**, the last sentence of which had read: "it now begins to appear that separation is the only possible way to union," the **Lutheran Standard**, official organ of the American Lutheran Church, says, in its issue of January 4, 1941: "Some of the pastors of our Church are very eager to get closer to Missouri and very skeptical about getting closer to the U.L.C.A.; and vice versa. And a third group—doubtless the largest—is convinced that the American Lutheran Church may be used of God to help bring about a union of all Lutheran groups in America but that the time is not ripe for pressing that matter; that we shall help bring about that consummation by cultivating friendliness with one another across synodical fences rather than

pointing out the nature of the factions that exist in other bodies; that such intersynodical agencies as the National Lutheran Council are a God-given opportunity for the cultivation of friendliness and for effective cooperation in matters of common interest and common responsibility; that it is high time to complement and supplement the writing and discussing of these with more joint work for God and against the forces of apathy and evil at home and abroad Differences on practical procedures do not keep us from working in fraternal and effective unity with one another and with approachable Lutherans outside our own body. We have learned in our ten years as a merged church that there is more to Christian unity than agreement in school theology; that a unity of heart and spirit, fostered by Christ, centered in Christ's Word, and finding expression in joint enterprise in Christ's work, is of supreme consequence. By a spiritual affinity we are drawn to those who show such a spirit, whether they be members of the United Lutheran Church, of the Missouri Synod, or of some other synod. That way, rather than the way of separation, lies union for the Lutheran Church of America."

In plain words, the American Lutheran Church feels that it is good strategy to draw those who disagree with it in doctrine into joint work with itself. Conscientious scruples as to pulpit and altar-fellowship will then disappear as a matter of course. Evidently the American Lutheran Church is quite convinced that Missouri's scruples as to prayer fellowship have already gone by the board. For in the article from which we have quoted, the **Lutheran Standard** states that by Lutheran union the editors of the **Luthera Witness** mean the acknowledgement of others as sound in the acknowledgement of others as sound in the faith, involving altar-fellowship, pulpit-fellowship, and cooperation in church-work." In the account of the recent "All-Lutheran Conference" at Columbus, Ohio, which was attended by three officials of the Missouri Synod, the **Lutheran Standard**, in its issue of Feb. 8, moreover, emphasizes that, assembled in their conference room, the men who participated in this meeting began their day's work with prayer. It lists and pictures as participants in the meeting, men from every synod, from the most liberal U.L.C. to the Missouri Synod, which latter synod was represented by its president, its publicity secretary, and the executive secretary of its foreign missions.*

It may not be amiss to remind our readers

that the Report of Committee No. 2 on Church Union which was adopted by the Ev. Luth. Synodical Conference of North America on Aug. 3, 1940, included the following resolution: "That we ask the Missouri Synod not to enter into fellowship (prayer-fellowship, pulpit-fellowship, altar-fellowship) with the American Lutheran Church until matters now objected to by members of the Synodical Conference have been clarified and until the whole matter has once more been presented to another meeting of the Synodical Conference, a policy which has already been laid down by the Missouri Synod itself." That is in keeping with the doctrinal position of the Missouri Synod, as stated, for instance, in the **Concordia Cyclopaedia**, under "Unionism", where we read: "Mixed (promiscuous) prayer among those who confess the truth and those who deny any part of it is sinful unionism."

P. H. B.

◎ "Cooperation Unites"—A Unionistic Approach to Lutheran Union

In his report to the Convention of the American Lutheran Conference held at Minneapolis, Minn., Nov. 13-15, 1940, the President of the Conference, Dr. Ryden, stated:

"God seems to have his own method of bringing the Lutherans closer together, and war and human suffering seem to play an important part in his program. In the last World War the Lutherans of America began to cooperate for the first time, and now, with war's calamities again breaking over the earth, God's command seems to come once more, calling on the Lutheran Church in this land of ours to close its ranks. It is a fateful hour, pregnant with possibilities. It is for this reason that the Commission on Lutheran Church Unity is proposing no other move at this time, except to urge united action on the part of all Lutherans in America on behalf of the distressed foreign missions. To bring about such coordinated action, it is suggesting the calling of a general conference of Lutheran leaders to discuss the working out of a practical plan. In view of the present situation, such a proposal seems the logical thing, and, if realized, may become productive of better understanding among all Lutheran groups in America." (A. L. Conference Convention Proceedings. **Journal of Theology**, Vol. VI, pp. 36.37.)

* cf. "Cooperation Unites", below

The A. L. Conference Commission on Lutheran Church Unity included these words in its report which was read by Dr. M. Reu:

"In pursuing its investigations, your Commission has become increasingly conscious of the difficulties which must be met and overcome before the ideal Lutheran unity can be fully achieved. However, it has also experienced a sense of encouragement over the unity of aim and purpose which it has already discovered. This is true particularly in the field of practical cooperation. A survey is not yet completed, but it reveals the fact that all of the member bodies of the American Lutheran Conference are cooperating with the United Lutheran Church in America and other Lutheran groups in such agencies as the National Lutheran Council, the Lutheran World Convention, and in student service work. In other practical enterprises the extent of this cooperation varies with the five groups comprising the American Lutheran Conference. Some of the groups carry on joint foreign mission work with the United Lutheran Church in America, others cooperate with the same body in theological training, in welfare work, negro missions, etc. From these facts we are brought face to face with a realization that practically two-thirds of the Lutherans of America, without having achieved unity in the matter of altar and pulpit fellowship in every instance, have nevertheless, by force of circumstances and the exigencies of the work, been compelled to unite in many enterprises of the kingdom of God. Shall we say that this is an inconsistency on our part, or shall we look upon it as God's own way of bringing the Lutherans of America closer together? Cooperative relationships with the Missouri Synod are not so easy to define, since they have been entirely unofficial in character. However, it is nevertheless a fact that in such matters as student service, negro missions, welfare work and parish education, representatives of the Missouri Synod are sitting in with representatives from various constituent groups of the American Lutheran Conference and other Lutheran bodies in an effort to coordinate such work.* The present emergency in Lutheran foreign missions would seem to indicate that God is leading us still farther in the direction which now faces these missions, He has imposed a task on

the Lutheran Church of America so vast and so important, that only by a common, united effort on the part of all Lutherans in America can we hope adequately to meet this challenge. It is our solemn conviction that no Lutheran body in America can ignore this challenge without suffering spiritual loss. This is God's hour, fraught with tremendous possibilities and responsibilities, and He is calling on us to lay aside, at least for the time being, existing differences, in order that we may respond to His call.** Such cooperation, we are convinced, will not retard the eventual achievement of true unity among the Lutherans of America, but, on the contrary, will hasten the process by bringing about a closer and more sympathetic understanding." (*Journal of Theology*, Vol., VI, pp. 56.57.)

The resolution on this matter as adopted by the A. L. Conference reads as follows:

"In the presence of the present grave emergency with which Lutheran foreign missions throughout the world are faced, and, in view of the fact that the Lutheran Church of America alone is in a position to come to their rescue, we are firmly convinced of the necessity of the closest cooperation on the part of all Lutheran groups in this hour of crisis, to the end that these missions will not perish. We are persuaded that such cooperation not only is demanded by the exigencies of the situation but that it will constitute the acceptance of a God-given task. We therefore solemnly call upon all Lutheran bodies in America to unite in this common enterprise, praying that God may help us to understand that this is an opportunity for service which He has placed before us. While we do not want to deny nor minimize the differences in doctrine and practice still existing between the Lutheran bodies of our country, we nevertheless deem cooperation in this hour of need all the more possible, since we know that, if desired, a clear demarcation line can be drawn between bodily help and mission work proper, and that the individual body remains free to determine the sphere of its cooperation." (*Journal of Theology*, Vol. VI., p. 85.)

The last sentence of this resolution was an amendment replacing the original words, which read: "That He (God) would have us put aside, for the time being, all misunder-

* Before accepting this statement we would want to verify this as to whether they sat in for the purpose of coordinating the work.

** God asks us to lay aside all differences once and for all, and to unite on the basis of His Holy Word, and on that alone.—P. H. B.

standings and differences, in order that we may be obedient to His will." The amendment was no doubt a bow in the direction of the Mo. Synod. Whether a line of demarcation can, in the present instance, be drawn between bodily help and mission work is open to question since the avowed purpose is to perpetuate the missions themselves, which happen to be outside our own fellowship of faith. As far as bodily help is concerned, Scripture clearly shows us that our duty is to help **all men** but **especially** those of the household of faith. Gal. 6, 10. Unless we are ready to declare those missions as being of our fellowship which have not hitherto been of our fellowship, we have according to God's Word no more call to give them physical aid than we have of giving physical aid to all men without distinction of denomination. Also, it must not be forgotten that these resolutions were brought by the Commission on **Lutheran Church Unity** and that in the background of the invitation to cooperate is the expressed hope that this kind of cooperation will hasten the process of the eventual achievement of true unity among Lutherans of America. Surely we who believe that God's Word **alone** can bring unity will not give encouragement to the hope that anything else than God's Word can hasten the achievement of Union.

In a resolution following the one just quoted the A. L. Conference has spoken as follows:

"In order to bring about the desired unity of action and purpose as indicated in the foregoing paragraph, and in order to further the spirit of closer sympathy and understanding among all Lutheran groups in America, we advocate the calling of a general Lutheran Conference to discuss the entire question of Lutheran cooperation with respect to the distressed foreign missions, as well as such other matters of common interest and practical cooperation as the proposed conference may find it advisable to consider; and we instruct the President of the American Lutheran Conference to invite the Presidents of the United Lutheran Church in America and the Synod of Missouri to join him in extending an invitation to all Lutheran general bodies in America to such a conference." (*Journal of Theology*, Vol. VI, p. 86.)

It is to be noted that the A. L. Conference is here asking the President of the Missouri Synod to assume joint responsibility with the President of the American Lutheran Conference and the President of the U.L.C. in calling such a conference. It is passing strange that

while the Presidents of the American Lutheran Conference and of the U.L.C. are designated, the President of the Mo. Synod and not the President of the Synodical Conference is singled out. Does the A. L. Conference on the basis of union negotiations between the Mo. Synod and the A. L. Church, feel a closer kinship with Missouri than with the Synodical Conference?

In this A. L. Conference campaign for co-operative endeavor we have also this resolution passed by the Conference:

"That the Commission on Home Missions be instructed to study in conjunction with Commissions of the United Lutheran Church and Synodical Conference, the problems of Mexican, Indian, Negro, Jewish, and Mountain Missions to the end that some method of inter-synodical approach and support may be devised." (*Journal of Theology*, Vol. VI, p. 93.)

Another step in this campaign for cooperation, without church-fellowship, is noted in the address of the Director of Student Service Department of the A. L. Conference who stated at the Convention.

"Our cooperative efforts are not limited to relationships within the Conference. From the early days of the Student Service Commission it was recognized that student service is a realm of Kingdom work where it is imperative that our lines run parallel. We are constantly seeking to explore the possibilities of better relationship with the Missouri Synod. Although there is no place where there is official cooperation, in numerous centers acquaintanceship and understanding of one another has grown, and in some places cooperation in certain mechanics connected with student work is going on." (*Journal of Theology*, Vol. VI, p. 129.)

In studying the entire A. L. Conference Convention Proceedings, the emphasis on reaching **doctrinal** unity with the Synodical Conference is decidedly lacking, while the desirability of cooperative endeavors, is repeatedly underscored as may be seen from the present resume.

How the A. L. Church in particular stands in this matter may be seen from the words of Dr. Ralph Long (**of the A. L. Church**) who in a lecture on "Seminary Day" in Columbus, Ohio, December 3, 1940, stated as follows:

"The history and the state of the Lutheran Church in America is well known to all of you. Efforts to reach an understanding on the part of some of the ma-

for bodies have been under way for a number of years. Although the progress is slow, there are those who believe that there is definite progress. For others it is too cautious. Meanwhile, it is refreshing to know that a greater cooperation is to be found among the Lutherans of America in solving the problems that confront us. Perhaps it will be the best strategy to work together in the practical things that challenge the cooperative interest of all until such time when the differences may be eliminated." (*Kirchliche Zeitschrift*, Vol. 65, p. 33.)

Our position is clearly this that the Word of God alone can bring about doctrinal unity, and that joint ecclesiastical cooperation where such doctrinal unity does not exist is unionism. "Religious Unionism consists in joint worship and work of those not united in doctrine." *Concordia Cyclopedia*, p. 774.

C. M. G.

• The Attitude of Our Clergy as to the Question of Union With the A.L.C.

A little over a year ago a questionnaire was sent to all the clergy of our Missouri Synod stating the reason for sending it in the following words: "In view of the fact 1) that we are confused as to the meaning of the resolutions on union adopted at the 1938 St. Louis Convention; 2) that we find the Doctrinal Basis unsatisfactory; and 3) that we have made numerous appeals to no avail; we ask: What is your attitude toward establishing church-fellowship with the American Lutheran Church on the Doctrinal Basis adopted at St. Louis and Sandusky? Every pastor and professor of our Synod is kindly being asked to fill out the attached card and to send it to the undersigned, to the end that in a special meeting a concerted appeal may be formulated and made to Synod."

The appeals mentioned in the above paragraph were made orally and also in writing through the proper channels to the men carrying the responsibility of the Union Movement in our midst. Perhaps, it was due to the inexperience of the undersigned that these appeals were not heard, we do not know. At any rate three and a half months elapsed after the final plea went unanswered and before the sending out of the questionnaire.

While the writer of this article takes full responsibility for the action, yet due credit must be given to others for their counsel and assistance.

The special meeting referred to on the questionnaire was soon made unnecessary

through the step taken by the large Park Region Conference which convened at Alexandria, Minn. on August 28-30, 1939. With 77 pastors and 5 teachers present the conference by way of resolution considered the doctrinal basis accepted in St. Louis as "inadequate, insufficient, and unsafe" and asked that the whole matter be taken up for "reconsideration at the Delegate Synod to be held in 1941."

It will be interesting to note here that our sainted Dr. Pfotenhauer was present at the memorable Alexandria meeting. When given the floor to speak on the Union Question, he urged that our synod must listen to the warnings of the Wisconsin and Norwegian Brethren. It was a privilege of the writer to talk privately to him with regard to the questionnaire. His repeated counsel was: "There will be many who will consider the mode of procedure unwise, but none will dare to censure you for it."

Since doctrinal matters are properly decided neither by a unanimous vote nor by the influence wielded by the leaders of the Church, but solely by the Word of God, we regret that the questionnaire could not be sent also to all laymen. For a layman's conviction based on the Scriptures must receive the same consideration as that of any clergy.

Nevertheless, the survey proved its worth. Its chief value consisted in that it helped to remove much of the hysteria for Union, in so far as it made many study the related matters more thoroughly. It, furthermore, played an important part in helping to call **The Confessional Lutheran** into being and placing it immediately on a working basis, thus enabling us to make our appeals heard again, other channels being closed to us.

For those who are interested in statistics we have tabulated the following: Out of 3997 cards sent out, 1536 replies were received. These replies we have grouped thus:

For Union (if doctrinal obstacles are removed)	46
For Union	318
For Union (if matters of practice are cleared)	54
Undecided (but favoring Union)	129
Undecided	216
Undecided (but inclined against Union)	90
Against Union	469
Noncommittal	37
Against the Questionnaire	104
Indifferent	5
Deceased or no address	11
Letters received against the Questionnaire	30

Letters asking for more information	4
Letters of encouragement and against the Union	23*

Outside of the fact that this poll shows a lack of unity in our midst and urges all conferences in our Synod to make every effort towards attaining unity through study of the Scriptures and our Confessions on the points at issue, we believe the figures here displayed have little value.

Many remarks made on cards returned and letters received are both interesting and important. Things could be said with regard to opposition shown against the poll, which we gladly overlook realizing the force of hysteria for Union that had gripped our synod in 1938, as evidenced by the large vote by which the resolutions of that year were passed. Suffice it to say that in matters of doctrine, irrespective of the reaction of our fellowmen, we have a definite duty to confess the truth over against error. While our mode of procedure may have been considered unwise by many of our theologians, what we did was done in a spirit of heeding the well-spoken warning of our fathers: "even upright lovers of truth are infected with a unionistic soft-heartedness in that they think that error and errorists are not to be attacked *ex professo*, but that it will suffice when positive testimony is indirectly given over against error." (Dr. Sihler in *L. u. W.*, Vol. 20, p. 1).

The repeated suggestion that we have a competent and efficient committee taking care of the Union Question and that our able leaders will not betray us into a false union has been wisely answered by the Synodical Conference in its 1940 resolutions: "All members of the Synodical Conference should feel in duty bound as brethren to watch and pray with those who must bear the responsibility, that no steps be taken that might in future lead us away from the Scriptural paths which the Synodical Conference has followed from the days of our fathers."

Many pages could be filled with remarks received on questionnaires. We have selected only a few of the more striking statements. Permitting the matter of judgment to rest entirely in the mind of the reader, we shall without comment quote some of those who favored union as well as the convictions of those who oppose it.

For Union

Rev. T. of California: "I am convinced that our officials and our St. Louis faculty are leading us right and that not one iota of truth

* Refers only to the number of letters in direct answer to the questionnaire. Some of these letters have resulted in lengthy correspondence.

will be sacrificed."

Rev. S. of Oklahoma: "Our able committee will not sell us out. These men are sincere. They deserve our support and prayers."

Rev. M. of California: "I have absolute confidence in Missouri's Union Committee and President Behnken. As soon as these men give the 'Go ahead' signal—I'll respond to marching orders."

Rev. S. of Michigan: "My personal conviction is that the sooner Church-fellowship is brought about the better it will be for all Lutherans concerned. **The Laity want it now.**"

Rev. B. of Illinois: Forces of evil and enemies of the church are increasing in an alarming manner. To combat these evils we must strive for greater unity in the Church."

Against the proposed Union

Rev. S. of Illinois: "After careful examination of the writings 'on Lutheran Union' as it is at present I must say: if we enter the Union now old Missouri will commit spiritual suicide."

Rev. B. of California: "I had my doubts, based on local experience, previous to the Centennial Convention, but gave our committee the benefit of the doubt, till Sandusky proved my fears were right, and I must now agree with Norwegians, Wisconsin, and **Cru-cible.**"

Rev. B. of Canada: "The use of two doctrinal statements is in itself an indication that complete unity has not yet been attained."

Rev. T. of Kansas: "I was a delegate to convention in St. Louis and voted for resolution, but have regretted it many times since, especially since the meeting of the A.L.C. It is evident that they desire a union in theory only. I am unalterably opposed to such union."

Rev. M. of Minnesota: "Let us first strengthen our own ranks."

Rev. G. of Iowa: "Our 'Brief Statement' and the 'Declaration' of the A.L.C. do not harmonize. The latter should be rejected."

Rev. S. of Texas: "I am absolutely opposed to the 'Doctrinal Basis' at St. Louis and Sandusky. Our Synod ought to rescind its action."

A. E. B.

✪ From Our Mail Bag

In our January issue we cited the sentiments of one of the teachers at our foremost seminary with regard to the cause to which **The Confessional Lutheran** is dedicated—the simple confession of truth. Another one of our theological professors writes us:—

"I am certainly glad that **The Confessional**

Lutheran has appeared on the scene to give a voice to the appreciable number in our midst who are not satisfied with the way things have been going in our union endeavors, and to unite them in protesting against the course determined on."

A rather well-known and able theologian of our (Missouri) Synod writes us: "Your article in the August issue of **The Confessional Lutheran**, 'Missouri's Great Martyr,' and an examination of Dr. Reu's essay, 'Toward Lutheran Unity'* first helped me to gain a proper estimate of how clear and consistent Dr. Walther's position was, if one only permits Walther's own declarations to stand and does not misconstrue them as does Dr. Reu."

A synodical president writes us: "**The Confessional Lutheran** is truly 'a voice in the wilderness' of our day."

One whose name is well known as a leader within our Synod writes with reference to the report of the intersynodical conference at Rochelle, Ill., which appeared in the December issue of **The Confessional Lutheran** ("Missouri No Longer Occupies the Position Held by it Formerly"): "Dr. Reu also is telling the truth about our own position taken at St. Louis in 1938. Keep up the good fight of faith."

The "Doctrinal Basis" embodied in the St. Louis Union Articles of 1938 must be rescinded.

P. H. B.

● Contemplating the Future

"Will the 'strictly confessional tendency' of the Lutheran Church, as it is represented here in the United States by the Synodical Conference, be able to maintain itself here and abroad?"

"God has charged His Church to proclaim His Word to the world without subtraction or addition. The Church has no further responsibility than this. The success of this rests with God. In this spirit the whole Synodical Conference is in this country ecclesiastically wholly united and active. To that end God must of course give and **preserve** teachers who not only have the necessary schooling, but who also are trained in the school of the **Holy Spirit**, so that they know by experience how absolutely necessary it is for the Church to cling immovably to **Sola Gratia** and **Sola Scriptura**."

Dr. F. Pieper, *Christl. Dogm.*, I, pp. 225-228.

P. H. B.

* In the article named we had shown how this essay misunderstands and misrepresents Walther's position, employing even a mistranslation in a citation from Walther's writings in doing so.

● Christian Patience

In a democratic church body considerable patience is necessary on all sides because final conclusions are reached very slowly.*

The 1938 convention of the Missouri Synod adopted the Declaration of the A.L.C. as a vital part of a doctrinal basis for **future church-fellowship** between the Missouri Synod and the American Lutheran Church. At various times since 1938 various conferences and conventions in our Synod have tried to come to some definite decision regarding the new doctrinal basis adopted in 1938 by our own Synod and regarding the A.L.C. Declaration in particular. Frequently a resolution against this new doctrinal basis or parts thereof has been frustrated.

Why?

There are, it seems, usually some in most groups who feel that we should not admit that our Synod made a mistake in adopting as satisfactory the Declaration of the A.L.C. There are others who insist, like the editors of the **Lutheran Witness**, that they can find nothing wrong in the Declaration. (See **L. W.**, LIX, 307.) And there is a larger number which simply has not studied the new basis of 1938, or all the reports of our Union Committee since 1938, and the more recent statements and publications which have come from the A.L.C. Some of these have neither carefully read the articles lately concluded in the **Lutheran Witness**, "Lutheran Union—A Discussion." Some are indifferent because they seem to feel that neither our Synod at its conventions nor its servants in their work can make a serious mistake in handling current union matters. And all the while ever so many of matters.

If anything has ever proved the need of Christian patience in a Synod, current union matters have certainly done so. But at the same time there should be no lack of firmness and frankness. "Exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine."

Such a course must needs eventually lead to a decision to rescind the St. Louis union articles of 1938.

G. S.

* Would that this had been borne in mind in 1931 and that the agreement which had been negotiated between our Committee on Lutheran Union and a commission of the A.L.C. (cp. *Proceedings*, p. 226f), had patently been permitted adequate consideration by the rank and file of our Church's clergy and laity before such definite action as that of the Centennial Convention in 1938. Again we say: Surely, our leaders should have confidence in the rank and file of our clergy and laity!—P. H. B.

**ACCEPTANCE OF THE ST. LOUIS
UNION ARTICLES OF 1938 MUST
BE RESCINDED**

THE CONFESSIONAL LUTHERAN

Published In The Interest Of Ecumenical Lutheranism

MOTTO: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."--1 Cor. 1, 10.

REV. PAUL H. BURGDORF

Editor, Clinton, Iowa

REV. J. BUENGER

Assistant Editor

REV. C. M. GULLERUD

Contributing Editor

REV. ARTHUR E. BECK, Business Manager, Foley, Minnesota

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IN THIS ISSUE:—The Leavening Influence of Error—A Simple Definition of Unionism—The Official Reply of the A.L.C.—The Ministerial Office—"What of It?"—More on Intersynodical Conferences—For the Record—Lest We Forget the Fathers—The Right and Duty of the Rank and File—The Marxist View of Christianity.

◎ The Leavening Influence of Error— An Easter Meditation

St. Paul says that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. Gal. 5, 9; I Cor. 5, 6.

That is a general statement, covering any and all errors which become admixed with the pure doctrine of the Church. Accepting this statement in simple faith, we are to be vigilant against the encroachment of ever so little error, because nothing will remain of divine truth once error has run its course.

The leavening nature of error, and especially also of such error as is proclaimed non-divisive by concessionists in Church union movements, can be demonstrated from Church history. The following quoted from **The Historical Open Questions Among American Lutherans**, by Theo. Hanssen* is more than just an ordinary warning for us Missourians in our present circumstances:—

"The so-called 'Open Questions', old ones as well as **new ones**, are as actual as ever among American Lutherans, even if they have not been much discussed lately. They have been a most deciding factor and feature in the merger movements, into which the Lutherans in America have just entered. **All** the mergers which have already **taken place** have been carried through on the basic principle that, since

so-called 'Open Questions' are championed by many so-called Lutherans, and since other differences which formerly were **not** considered to be 'Open Questions' are now declared **to be such** and are practically **treated** as such, **MERGER SYNODS** necessarily and wisely must acknowledge and even officially tolerate them. **THEREFORE, FUTURE MERGERS IN ALL PROBABILITY WILL BE NEGOTIATED ON THIS SAME BASIS OR NOT AT ALL.**" (p. 92.)

"Future mergers in all probability will be negotiated on this same basis or not at all." In 1936 that was prophetic. Pastor Hanssen could speak prophetically, because he was speaking as an historian, and an historian is simply a prophet turned backward. Since 1938 Pastor Hanssen's pronouncement no longer constitutes merely an historical prophecy. It constitutes a serious historical indictment and an earnest call to repentance for us of the Missouri Synod for whom and to whom he was particularly speaking. For the Doctrinal Basis of our St. Louis Union Articles of 1938 was negotiated precisely in the manner in which it was so clearly predicted this would be the case, if there should be negotiations at all. Tolerance has been officially granted to historical 'Open Question' errors by their being declared 'non-divisive'."

Pastor Hanssen rightly goes on to say:—

* Lutheran Literary Board, Burlington, Iowa, 1936.
60 cts.

“**‘Official’** toleration means much more than simple toleration. It **means** that within the **same** synod acknowledged errors and unsound practices are declared to be on a par with confessed pure doctrine and preferred sound practice, that clear testimony for truth and against error is greatly discouraged and in some measure even prohibited and that errors are fostered and errorists are encouraged and protected.” (Ibidem.)

That Pastor Hanssen foresaw very clearly also here what has now already come to pass is obvious from the recent pronouncement of the American Lutheran Church at its 1940 Detroit Convention. The pronouncement that “not every **traditional explanation**” of Scripture “is binding” can in the light of the circumstances amid which it was pronounced be understood only as a serving of notice on Missouri that its own erstwhile Scriptural views regarding the questions which it so foolishly declared need not be divisive in 1938 can be regarded as no more than merely just that—“traditional explanations.” (What else could concessionists expect?)

Pastor Hanssen finally concludes, also very rightly:—

“Thus, after a merger has been consummated, the **unavoidable consequences** are, that the conservative party, after it has entered into union with the more liberal parties, **very quickly SINKS** to the deep level of the **MOST LIBERAL** party within the merger body or even **below** that.”

What apprehension—not to say alarm—must fill us! In his “tender of fraternity” at the recent Detroit Convention of the American Lutheran Church, no one less than the chairman of the Missouri Synod’s Committee on Lutheran Union voiced the appeal to “move forward to the consummation” of the contemplated fellowship between the Missouri Synod and the American Lutheran Church, merely on the basis of the fact that it “became **apparent**” in meetings of the committee of which he is chairman and of a commission of the A.L.C. that we are agreed even only on the “**main** doctrines” of God’s Word, other doctrines, as is now well known, having been mistakenly declared non-divisive. No wonder that, in introducing the chairman of this committee, Dr. Reu, leading theologian and commissioner of the ALC, welcomed him as “embodying and personifying” something

apart from most of the Missouri Synod, of which Dr. Reu expressly declared that he could not say that all is good in it**, and, with that in mind, claimed him as a brother in the strict sense of the word. These things were not done in a corner. They were done in open convention and are a matter of public record. Where is it all to lead to, if we permit such things to go on? Has not Pastor Hanssen supplied the answer beforehand?

It only remains to say that such warnings as that which Pastor Hanssen sounded in 1936 need no demonstration from Church History for an enlightened Christian and a Confessional Lutheran, as he also himself points out, although Church history is really so full of them that it can be said fairly to bristle with such demonstrations. All that is needed by a believing child of God amid a mistaken glorying on the part of some as to what has been accomplished in the present union movement is to remind ourselves of what God so pertinently and pointedly says: Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven that ye may be a new lump, even as ye are unleavened!”

Let us purge out the old Iowan leaven which is embodied in the Doctrinal Basis that is contained in the St. Louis Union Articles of 1938 and which seems already to have begun to work mightily in our Church. Let us purge it out by rescinding the St. Louis Union Articles of 1938 without much ado, and without any further thought than that of wishing to remain the unleavened body of sincerity and truth which we have heretofore been known to be by the grace of God.

P. H. B.

❶ The Official Reply of The American Lutheran Church to The Missouri Synod’s Committee on Lutheran Union

(Continued)

III The Minneapolis Theses and the A.L.C. Union Basis

Continuing our discussion of the subject announced in the above title, we find that, after declaring itself with respect to the doctrine of justification and as to its position with respect to non-fundamental doctrines, the American Lutheran Church in its official reply to the Missouri Synod’s Committee on Lutheran Union, as given at its Detroit Convention, next responds to the request to ex-

** Cp. e. g. Theologische Quartalschrift; Jan., p. 55.

plain what it means by this statement of its Sandusky Resolutions:

"We believe that the Brief Statement viewed in the light of our Declaration is not in contradiction to the Minneapolis Theses."

The official A.L.C. explanation of this reads as follows:

"Our Commissioners said the following in explanation of the phrase 'viewed in the light of our Declaration'. This phrase says three things—(1) In regard to the question concerning the essence of the Church, the Antichrist, the conversion of the Jews, the physical resurrection of the martyrs, and the reign of a thousand years mentioned in Rev. 20, we accept the Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod, only with the limitations set forth in our Declaration; (2) In regard to the other points mentioned in our Declaration we accept the corresponding points of doctrine in the Brief Statement as they are either 'supplemented' in our Declaration or 'emphasized' as to those points which seemed essential to us. Thus the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures has been supplemented in our Declaration with reference to the human factor, and in the doctrine of Election and Conversion those points have been emphasized which seemed essential to us; (3) In regard to the Brief Statement in general this phrase intends to say that we are conscious of our agreement with 'the points of doctrine' contained therein, without, however, on our part sharing the exegetical or other lines of argumentation in every case, and without feeling obligated in every case to employ the same terminology." With this explanation of our Commissioners we fully agree. Since now and then something is considered as a 'point of doctrine' which hardly may be thus called, we are glad that our Commissioners, for clarity's sake, exemplified which statements of the Brief Statement are by us not called 'points of doctrine' e. g. the statement that Adam before the fall had a scientific knowledge." (K. Z., pp. 693-694.)

Point one of this explanation we have already treated. Point two makes it clear that the A.L.C. acceptance of pivotal doctrines (e. g. the doctrine of Scripture, Justification, Election and Conversion.) of the Brief Statement hinges entirely on what they have said in their Declaration. And when they say they emphasize in the Declaration what "seemed

essential" to them, then what they have failed to emphasize assumes an importance we dare not overlook. One cannot help but note that they have failed to emphasize the Antitheses contained in the Brief Statement, but have in several places de-horned them.

In answer to point three, we can do no better than to repeat the words of Rev. J. Buegger: "Whoever is acquainted with the distinction they make between a doctrine proper and additional 'theological' developments of it, sees at a glance that the A.L.C. Declaration leaves a wide margin for disagreement in a sphere which to us is doctrine but to them 'theology'. No doubt the A.L.C. representatives believe that as far as doctrine proper, according to **their** definition of that term, goes the statements made in our Synodical Confession are correct. But what about certain assertions which may go beyond what they consider to be doctrine in the strict sense of the word? What about certain distinctions which now may be regarded as 'theological explanations'? Do these perhaps belong to a sphere in which each side is left at liberty to cling to their own tenets? These questions must be clarified before doctrinal unity can be declared." (Conf. Luth., I., p. 70.)

Summary: Instead of allaying our fears on this third objection the A.L.C. answer merely has confirmed them, and for the reasons stated above we cannot be satisfied with their explanation on this point.

IV. A.L.C. Membership in the A. L. Conference

The questioning which has been raised among us with respect to the statement—"we are not willing to give up our membership in the American Lutheran Conference" is answered by the A.L.C. in the following words:

"Concerning our relation to the American Lutheran Conference we concur with the Declaration of our Commissioners saying, that the above-mentioned resolution of Sandusky 'is no absolute statement, but one conditioned by the future development of the American Lutheran Conference.' We confidently hope that our sister Synods of the American Lutheran Conference occupy the same doctrinal and practical ground that is occupied by us. (For the exact wording of this last paragraph compare the official report of the convention.)" (K. Z., p. 694.)

Since the wording here seems to be somewhat in doubt, what we have to say here can only refer to the wording found in the K. Z. Assuming that this wording is correct, we note

that the hope is expressed that the other synods in the American Lutheran Conference occupy the same doctrinal and practical ground as they. That the other bodies of the American Lutheran Conference occupy the same ground as the A. L. Church with reference to certain doctrines which have been in dispute, we can well see, if they, too, will view the Brief Statement in the light of the Declaration. For we are told that when the Brief Statement is viewed in this light then it is not in contradiction to the Minneapolis Theses upon which the American Lutheran Conference was founded. That the other bodies of the A. L. Conference occupy the same ground as the A. L. Church in matters of practice we can also see, but this does not allay our fears.

Summary: The statement: "We are not willing to give up this membership" is just as disturbing to us as it was before and even more so, because it is not made clear to us upon **what** future developments of the A. L. Conference this statement is conditioned.

At this point in its statements of the objections which have been raised, the Union Committee of the Mo. Synod expresses the hope that the action taken by the A. L. Church will be such as to make it possible to report to our delegate Synod in 1941 that the difficulties have been removed. We cannot see how this can now be reported if those who have raised the objections are not satisfied with the explanations given.

V. The Pittsburgh Agreement

The fifth difficulty which is mentioned by our Committee is the relations of the A.L.C. to the United Lutheran Church. And here there is mentioned particularly the Pittsburgh Agreement, which is a document treating the questions of lodgery, unionism and the Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. In answering the questions which have been raised on these matters, the A.L.C. refers to its action on the Pittsburgh Agreement. Its action on the Pittsburgh Agreement reads as follows: "We accept the Pittsburgh Agreement with the definite conviction that this agreement is in complete harmony with the Brief Statement." (K. Z., p. 752.) That the wording of the Pittsburgh Agreement is at many points similar to the wording of the Declaration is evident. But that the P. A. can be understood in the sense of the Brief Statement—this is something we cannot admit. That the A.L.C. has accepted the P. A. which (not to be forgotten) is an **agreement** with the U.L.C. on the points of lodgery, unionism, and the doc-

trine of the Scriptures, makes our hopes of reaching unity with the A.L.C. still more remote.

VI. Unionism, Lodgery, and Prayer-Fellowship

The final points brought to the attention of the A.L.C. for explanation deal with their position on unionism, lodgery, and the prayer-fellowship question. Here the A.L.C. answers as follows:

"As far as 'Unionism' is concerned our standpoint is publicly stated, and as to membership in lodges the difference is hardly so great as some fear. Referring to prayer-fellowship we are still convinced that prayer-fellowship is wider than church-fellowship, but we do not consider this difference as church-divisive and believe in the course of time it will be overcome completely." (K. Z., p. 694.)

Clearly enough, this is no answer at all so far as the questions regarding lodgery and unionism are concerned. And regarding prayer-fellowship the A.L.C. thus simply reiterates its position with which we do not agree. With regard to its position on unionism we find this publicly stated in its Pittsburgh Agreement with the U.L.C. Here, in the second paragraph of the first division, we read: "That pastors and congregations shall not practice indiscriminate pulpit and altar-fellowship with pastors and churches of other denominations, whereby doctrinal differences are ignored or virtually made matters of indifference. Especially shall no religious fellowship whatsoever be practiced with such individuals and groups as are not basically evangelical." (K. Z., p. 695.) Without making further comment on this paragraph at this time, we would simply call the attention of our readers to two words which are significant, the words "indiscriminate" and "especially". Anyone may see that this paragraph leaves room for the widest interpretation. Furthermore, a public display of the A.L.C. standpoint on unionism is furnished in its affiliation with the American Lutheran Conference and in its connections with the National Lutheran Council, as well as in the common practice prevailing in the field. Again, its position on the prayer-fellowship question shows that it does not regard as unionism what we regard as unionism. When this body says in its reply to our Committee that it is still convinced that prayer-fellowship is wider than church-fellowship, and that it believes that this difference between us will in the course of time be overcome completely, this can only mean

one thing to it, and that is this: If they are sincere in their conviction on this point (as we assume they are) then this difference can, in their view, only be overcome by winning us over to their view. The method here used of disposing of this difference **now** by saying that it is not "church-divisive" is by this time so familiar that we hardly need to call attention to it.

With regard to membership in lodges the A.L.C. states: "The difference is hardly so great as some fear." That there is a difference is then admitted, but it is considered a small difference. This difference may seem small in the eyes of the A.L.C., but whether this difference is so small in our eyes is a different question. How the A.L.C. regards differences on this important question of lodgery may be seen by its acceptance of the most inadequate paragraph on lodgery which is called an **Agreement** with the lodge-infested U.L.C. on this point. This paragraph of the Pittsburgh Agreement reads: "That all persons affiliated with any of the Societies or Organizations designated in the Washington Declaration of the U.L.C.A. as 'Organizations injurious to the Christian faith' should sever their connection with such society or organization and shall be so admonished; and members of our churches not now affiliated with such Organizations shall be warned against such affiliation. Especially shall the shepherds of the flock be admonished to refuse adherence and support to such Organizations." (K. Z., p. 695.) How the U.L.C. could adopt this paragraph by a majority of 5 to 1 in view of their liberal attitude towards the membership in the lodge, is easily understood. For here nothing is said regarding church discipline and ultimate excommunication of those who, in spite of admonition, continue as members in the lodge. Again the word "especially" and what follows, further weakens the already weak statement which precedes it. That the A.L.C. accepts this statement in the sense of the Declaration and the Brief Statement does not help matters any.

Though the acceptance of the Pittsburgh Agreement may be viewed by the extreme leftists of the U.L.C. (such as Dr. Alleman) as being a step away from their liberalism, it cannot be considered by us as being a great achievement for conservative Lutheranism in our country as some have regarded it.

These observations are not written in the spirit of trying to frustrate all hopes of union with the A.L.C. They are presented as a contribution for the better understanding of

the differences which separate us, with the hope and prayer that these and all other differences which separate us may truly be removed so that we may have a true union with doctrinal agreement in all things. We have written as much with the thought of serving the A.L.C. as with the thought of serving our own Synod. Surely it is always consistent with Christian charity to point out errors and dangers which threaten the salvation of souls. To remain silent under such circumstances would be an inexcusable **lack** of charity.

C. M. G.

● The Dogmatic-Historical Background Of the Present Union Movement

With Special Reference to the Specific Doctrines Involved

By Rev. J. Buenger

(Continued)

4. The Ministerial Office

There is a wide-spread conviction within the Synodical Conference (though not within the A.L.C., for they know better) that our opponents have abandoned their old position in the doctrine of the public ministry and adopted that of the Synodical Conference. This conviction is based on nothing but the unfounded assumption that a doctrinal difference ceases to exist when it is no longer made an object of controversy. The fact is not that the difference has disappeared, but only that the discussion of it has been discontinued.

The situation is very much like that which obtained at the time when the Reformed were interested in a union with Lutherans. There had been a time when the Reformed decidedly rejected the Lutheran doctrine of the Lord's Supper and set forth their own doctrine as plainly as they could. But conditions changed and there came a time when they stressed those points only in which they agreed with Lutherans and passed over the difference between them with silence. Since the days of Calvin, Reformed theologians have time and again tried to come to an agreement with Lutherans, using as a common basis the statement that the true body and blood of Christ are received in the Lord's Supper, that body which He gave for us, that blood which He shed for us on the cross. This statement is correct as far as it goes, and there have always been Lutherans who were favorably inclined to a union on such a basis believing that by it the difference between them and the Reformed was removed. But there were always others who saw and pointed out the fact that the

difference in doctrine was by no means removed but only covered up. While one side held that Christ's body and blood are received only spiritually, by believing, the other side insisted that all communicants, worthy and unworthy, receive Christ's body and blood by taking the bread and wine.

Likewise there was a time when the Iowans took pains to set forth the differences in the doctrine of the public ministry between them and us with all clearness and firmness. And then again a time came when, without withdrawing any of their former statements, they stressed the points only in which they agreed with Missouri. And there are many on our side who are perfectly satisfied with declarations of this kind because they cannot see anything wrong in them.

The Davenport Theses of 1873 decidedly stress the difference. They say:

"4. In the doctrine of the ministry we could not admit that according to the Confessions of our Church the office comes about by individual Christians conferring their spiritual priestly rights.

"5. In opposition to this we maintain that the public office is conferred by God through the congregation in its totality and essence (in ihrer Ganzheit und Wesenheit) through the orderly call, because the **'mandatum de constituendis ministris'** is not given to the individual members but to the Church as such."

The same tenets are expressed in the Madison Theses of 1875:

"2. That which the Symbols of the Lutheran Church state as confession on the doctrine of the ministry is our confession also. But the specifically Missourian doctrine of conferring the office (Uebertragungslehre) which goes beyond that common Confessional basis, is, aside from the correctness or incorrectness of the doctrine, neither a doctrine of the Lutheran Confessions, nor is it, according to its nature, a doctrine of faith, and therefore we cannot regard it as a doctrine divisive of church-fellowship."

This is further explained by Dr. S. Fritschel in the following words:

"That all Christians, by virtue of their spiritual priesthood, have the general command and call to manifest their communion with the Gospel and their right to the means of grace through word and work, of which duty they cannot rid themselves

through any kind of a conferring of it upon others; but the **special** command the execution of which is the office of preaching and the administration of the Sacraments, and on which rests the right to appoint ministers is given neither to a special class in the Church, nor to individual persons, nor to individual church-members as such, but to the Church as such, i. e. in the totality of its parts or in its entirety and essence." (**Iowa und Missouri**, p. 11ff.)

A distinction is made in these words between the duty of Christians as possessors of the Gospel and the general priesthood to confess the Word of God by word and deed, and the special right and duty to exercise the office of the keys by calling and ordaining ministers of the Word. The former is said to belong to each individual Christian, the latter only to the "Church in its totality," but not to individual Christians. We ask first: What is meant by the "Church in its totality," and secondly: Has the distinction made by Iowa any basis in Scripture and in the Confessions of our Church?

The terms "the Church in the totality of its parts," or "the Church in its entirety and essence," and the like, mean: not any congregation of Christians, but congregations in conjunction with the ministry. This is seen from the Madison theses:

"A call consummated by the Church is fully valid and orderly only 1) when the constituent parts of the Church have taken part in it in the proper manner, without violent curtailment of their rights, and not either by the ministry or by the body of hearers usurping it exclusively and arbitrarily." And: "For a proper discharge from office as well as for the installing the cooperation of the entire Church consisting of congregations and the ministry is necessary." (**Quellen und Dokumente**, pp. 276 and 277.)

Here it becomes evident why, in the doctrine of the Church the A.L.C., like the old Iowa Synod, now insists on the statement that the Word and Sacrament are essential parts of the Church. It is done in order to secure to the ministry, as the agency of the Word and Sacrament, its share in the right of the call.

Our second question is: Has the Iowa distinction any basis in Scripture and in our Confessions? Does Scripture teach that, while the Gospel and the general priesthood indeed belong to every individual believer, the office

of the keys and hence the right to call are given only to the Church in its totality and essence?

In Matthew 16, 19 the Lord says to Simon Peter: "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Peter certainly was not the Church in its totality and essence but an individual believer, and he was the first one to receive the keys because he was the first one of the disciples who confessed his faith in Christ as the eternal Son of God. That Peter did not receive the keys for his own person, but that he only shared this privilege with all other disciples, is seen from John 20, 21-23, where Jesus confers the same power on the disciples gathered in Jerusalem behind closed doors. And in Matt. 28, 18-20, the duty to teach and baptize all nations is conferred on the whole Church in general. It is evident, then, from Scripture that the office of the keys belongs to the whole Church because the Church is the communion of saints, of people to whom this office is primarily given, but not to the Church in its totality as distinguished from the individual believers.

This truth is also very clearly set forth in our Confessions. The Smalcald Articles say: "In addition to this it is necessary to acknowledge that the Keys belong not to the person of one particular man, but to the Church, as many most clear and firm arguments testify. For Christ, speaking concerning the Keys, Matt. 18, 19, adds: If two or three of you shall agree on earth, etc. Therefore He grants the Keys principally and immediately to the Church, just as also for this reason the Church has principally the right of calling. For just as the promise of the Gospel belongs certainly and immediately to the entire Church so the Keys belong immediately to the Church, because the Keys are nothing else than the office whereby this promise is communicated to everyone who desires it, just as it actually manifests that the Church has power to ordain ministers of the Church." (Trigl., p. 511.) These words plainly state that the Keys are given to the Church in the same sense in which the Gospel belongs to the whole Church, hence to Christians as such. The Iowan distinction which is opposed to the "Missourian Uebertragungslehre" is, therefore, not taken from Scripture nor from the Lutheran Confessions, but is of their own invention.

The vital difference, then, between the Syn-

odical Conference and the A.L.C. lies in the question: To whom are the Keys originally given? We answer: To the whole Church, i. e. to every Christian congregation since it is primarily given to the believers as such. They answer: To the whole Church, i. e. to the Church in its totality, congregations in conjunction with the clergy, but not to individual Christians as such.

But even the apparent conformity in doctrine does not go quite as far as it might seem at first sight. It is true, both sides confess that God confers the office on certain persons through the congregation. But not in the same sense. According to the Lutheran doctrine, as confessed by the Synodical Conference, the congregation as a communion of the original possessors of the Keys confers **the public administration** of these powers on certain persons who, therefore, remain under the supervision of the congregation. This is denied by the A.L.C. According to their conception it simply pleases God to confer the office on certain persons "through the instrumentality of the congregation" (as Dr. Deindorfer puts it, as quoted in **L. u. W.** 1904, p. 445), the Christians themselves having no part or lot in what the congregation confers on the incumbent of the office. These are two entirely different conceptions, and the difference must not be veiled in a unionistic manner by simply declaring that God calls through the congregation.

What interest did the Iowans have in clinging to this peculiar doctrine which seems to have no practical value at present? It is the last remnant of the Romanizing error of Pastor Loehe and of other Neo-Lutherans who, frankly rejecting the doctrine of the Lutheran Confessions, were striving for a new definition of the Church and the ministry in order to find a basis for a Church government which they might call divinely ordained. The history of the Buffalo Synod and their own experience showed the Iowans that it would have been suicidal for them to carry out Pastor Loehe's principles in practice here in this country. They very soon saw that they had to adapt themselves, to some extent, to the doctrine and practice of Missouri, which they did much to the grief of Pastor Loehe and his friends in Germany. Still, throughout all these years, they have held tenaciously to this remnant of their old error in order to assert their agreement in principle with Loehe and to keep a certain distance from the position of the Synodical Conference.

But while the Iowans in former years for decades stressed their special conception of

the Church and the ministry, maintaining at the same time that it involved a non-divisive doctrinal difference, the time came when they began more and more to emphasize the points in which they still agreed with their opponents and to put their differences into the background without, however, giving up any of their views.

This was first done in their efforts to come to an agreement with the Ohio Synod. After preliminary colloquies at Richmond (1883) and at Michigan City (1893), church-fellowship was finally established between Iowa and Ohio at Toledo in 1907. The thesis on the ministry accepted at Toledo reads:

"2. The Ministerial Office. a) To the rights and duties of the spiritual priesthood do not only belong the general command and call that the believers manifest their communion in the Gospel and their right to the means of grace through word and work and, accordingly, to instruct their families in the Word of God, and in general and in diverse ways to teach and admonish one another, and even also without a special call to preach to the heathen and non-Christians, and in any case of necessity to administer holy Baptism;—but also the establishment of the public ministry, since this office is by Christ originally and immediately given to the whole Church. b) The office of a preacher or pastor is the power to administer publicly the means of grace in behalf of the congregation, which power rests on a special command of the Lord valid for all times and is conferred through the call. c) The calling is a right of that congregation within which the pastor is to administer the office. The ordination is a public solemn confirmation of the call and only an apostolic ecclesiastical ordinance."

It is noticeable that in this entire thesis only such points are mentioned in which Iowa and the Ohio Synod as a former member of the Synodical Conference were already agreed. In this respect this thesis is exactly like the one accepted at Michigan City of which Dr. S. Fritschel wrote: "The thesis, therefore, although in Missourian phraseology, does not state anything beside that which the doctrine of the Missourians and that of the Lutheran Church have in common, first that every true Christian by virtue of his spiritual priesthood has the right to put the means of grace into operation, and secondly that the public administration of these is a power resting on a special command of the Lord which He has given to His Church and which He confers upon

the ministers of the Word through the call. However, nothing is said of the specifically Missourian feature, namely that the ministerial office has publicly to exercise only the rights of the spiritual priesthood instead and in behalf of the individual Christians, i. e. the Missourian 'Uebertragungslehre'." ("Kirchl. Zeitschr.," XXI, p. 168.)

Yes, such is indeed the case. In other words, the theses of Michigan City and of Toledo are unionistic formulas pure and simple, covering common ground only, and straddling doctrinal differences. Once this is understood, it is an easy matter to see the Chicago Theses and the A.L.C. Declaration on the ministerial office in their proper light.

As to the Chicago Theses, it is evident that their statements on the ministerial office go in no way beyond the Toledo Theses and the explanation of Dr. S. Fritschel. A distinction is made between the spiritual priesthood and the pastoral office in such a manner as to reserve for individual Christians only those rights and duties which all the statements of Old Iowa concede to individual Christians, while the right to call is simply ascribed to the congregation without stating whether this is meant in the sense of Iowa or of Missouri. The two theses follow:

"V. The Spiritual Priesthood.

"16. Christ has made all believers kings and priests in the sight of God, His Father, and in the saving Gospel and in the Sacraments has bestowed upon them as such all the spiritual possessions which He has acquired by His redemption.

"17. Every Christian is to exercise this universal priesthood, e.g. by his testimony in behalf of the saving truth according to opportunity and the measure of his knowledge and ability.

"VI. The Pastoral Office.

"18. As distinct from the universal priesthood, the pastoral office, as regards its essence and purpose, consists in this, that a person qualified for this office and duly called to the same, edifies, teaches, and governs a certain congregation in Christ's stead by means of God's Word and administers the Sacraments in its midst.

"19. This office is of divine institution, and its functions, aforementioned, are precisely defined in God's Word. Accordingly, it is the right and duty of every Christian congregation to establish this office, and this is done by means of calling."

pastor. Such action is a function of the universal priesthood.

"20. The calling of a pastor is the right of that congregation in which the minister is to discharge the duties of his office, and by such calling Christ appoints His ministers for the congregation. Ordination is not a divine, but an ecclesiastical ordinance for the public and solemn confirmation of the pastor's call."

In these statements Missouri and Iowa have been agreed for a long time. But that which is here omitted, "the specifically Missourian feature" which really is the genuine Lutheran doctrine is set forth very clearly and distinctly in the Brief Statement:

"30. The Original and True Possessors of all Christian rights and Privileges.—

Since the Christians are the Church, it is self-evident that they alone **originally** possess the spiritual gifts and rights which Christ has gained for, and given to, His Church. Thus St. Paul reminds all believers: 'All things are yours,' 1 Cor. 3, 21, 22, and Christ Himself commits to all believer the keys of the kingdom of heaven, Matt. 16, 18-19; 18, 17-20; John 20, 22, 23, and commissions all believers to preach the Gospel and administer the Sacraments, Matt. 28, 19, 20; 1 Cor. 11, 23-25. Accordingly we reject all doctrines by which this spiritual power or any part thereof is adjudged as originally vested in certain individuals or bodies, such as the Pope, or the bishops, or the order of the ministry, or the secular lords, or councils or synods, etc. The officers of the Church publicly administer their office only by virtue of delegated powers, conferred on them by the original possessors of such powers, and such administration remains under the supervision of the latter, Col. 4, 17."

After this has been established, the statement made in paragraph 31, that "the Christians of a certain locality are required, by divine order, to make provision that the Word of God be publicly preached in their midst and the Sacraments administered according to the institution of Christ, by persons qualified for such work," can have but one meaning. It expresses the Lutheran doctrine, as taught in the Confessions and by the Synodical Conference.

The A.L.C. will gladly leave this conception to the Synodical Conference, though not as a doctrine of faith but as a "theological" opinion. However, they demand of us that we

likewise regard their peculiar Iowan conception of the ministerial office as a non-divisive difference, and they would refuse church-fellowship to any church body which would **reject** their teaching as a deviation from the Lutheran Confessions and hence as a false doctrine.

For this reason it would not have been the proper thing for them to reject the declarations on the ministry made in the Brief Statement. Nor could they accept them without reservations, since they agree with them only in part. Therefore the only thing left for them to do, according to their conviction, was to supplement them by a declaration of their own, which they did in the following words:

"IV. The office of the Public Administration of the Means of Grace.—

The office of the public administration of the means of grace is a divine institution. The power to forgive or retain sin, to preach the Law and the Gospel, has been committed by Christ not to an individual person, such as Peter and his so-called successors, nor only to the twelve Apostles nor to a special order, but to all Christians, Matt. 16: 19; 18: 18; John 20: 19, 20; to be compared with Luke 24: 33-36. In order to have one in its midst who exercises this office publicly, in its name and by its order, the Christian congregation calls a capable person. By the call the congregation erects the office of the public administration of the means of grace in its midst. Ordination is the confirmation of the call; it is not a divine but a commendable human ordinance."

This statement contains those points which, as Dr. Fritschel repeatedly declared, have always been confessed by Missouri and Iowa alike, but avoids the difference between them. At the same time it also avoids the terminology of paragraph 31 of the Brief Statement, which, even aside from paragraph 30, very strongly expresses the Missourian doctrine. But how about the Iowan view that the calling of pastors is a prerogative of the Church in its totality and essence? This part of their doctrine has been taken care of in the preceding paragraph where the visible side of the Church, consisting in the use of the means of grace, is declared to be permissible. By this reservation the right to understand the term "all Christians" in the sense of "the Church in its totality" is safeguarded. For if Word and Sacrament are essential parts of the Church, then a congregation of Christians without any representation of the clergy would

lack the prerequisite to exercise a right which is given to Christians only in conjunction with the ministry as the representatives of Word and Sacrament.

Nor is this difference done away with by the fact that the congregations in our synod also are, for the sake of good order, supposed to avail themselves of the advice of the synodical officers when calling a pastor; for this is not done in the belief that a congregation without the representation of the clergy has no right to call. Therefore, in spite of the apparent uniformity in practice at the present time, there remains a doctrinal difference as positive as the difference between a matter of Christian liberty and a divine command. Besides, the Iowan principle leaves the door open for a Romanizing conception of Church government.

Thus there is no basis at all for the assumption that the A.L.C. has abandoned its former error and accepted the position of the Synodical Conference concerning the ministerial office. On the contrary, the difference remains that according to our doctrine the officers of the Church publicly administer their offices only by virtue of delegated powers, conferred on them through the call by the original possessors of such powers, while the A.L.C. denies this, maintaining that God simply uses the congregation as an instrument to confer powers which are given to the Church in its totality, but not to the individual believers. We have seen that the agreement which seemed to have been reached in the Chicago Theses and in the A.L.C. Declaration covers the common ground only but ignores the difference between us and the A.L.C. A plain statement made by the A.L.C., that all the spiritual gifts which Christ has gained for us, **including the keys of the kingdom of heaven and hence the right to call ministers**, are originally given to all Christians and to each and every believer as such, would settle the difference at this point.

❶ Lest We Forget the Language Of Our Fathers

Dr. F. Pieper in his pamphlet "Unionism" aptly remarks: "Neither are we separatists, who are disturbing the peace of the Church. We are contending for the true Christian peace, which is not an external peace but a peace of hearts and of minds that have found rest in the Word of God." (P. 4)

On page six in the same treatise he makes this significant remark: "He", referring to the Christian pastor, "must not only have a thor-

ough knowledge of 'sound doctrine' . . . but also be able to convince the gainsayers and stop their mouths . . . by refuting them from the Word of God, so that the false teachers will stand exposed as false teachers."

As a true teacher, Dr. Pieper tells us: "the Bible teaches that Unionism, fellowship with false doctrine, is **detrimental** to the Church, because it is a **menace to the soul**. We must not imagine God to be a tyrant . . . God's commandments . . . are made in the interest of His great unspeakable divine **love** and **mercy**, which would lead us poor sinners to salvation." (P. 7.)

Luther warns George Major: "A teacher who holds his peace in the face of error and yet insists that he is a teacher of the truth, is worse than an open enthusiast . . . Aye either he is secretly at one with the enemy, or he is a doubter and a weather-cock, waiting to see which way the wind will blow, whether Christ or the devil will prevail." (Quoted by Dr. Pieper on p. 37 in his pamphlet, "Unionism.") St. L., XVII, 1180.

Dr Pieper again states: "Sinful Unionism is furthermore in evidence when, in negotiations to bring about unity, ambiguous terms are used, i.e. terms that are interpreted correctly by some and misinterpreted by others." (Ibid. p. 38.)

"Anti-biblical Unionism is finally in evidence when a church-body in its constitution subscribes to the Confessions of the orthodox (i. e., the Lutheran) Church, but when it at the same time permits false teachers to go unchallenged." (Dr. Pieper, "Unionism", p. 38.)

"We will attend so-called 'free conferences' and discuss doctrinal differences with our opponents in all patience and kindness and humility with a view of establishing unity. But Church **fellowship** we cannot establish and maintain save with those who agree with us in Christian doctrine." (Ibid., p. 39.)

A. E. B.

❷ The Right and Duty of The Rank and File

The forgotten man in Luther's Day was the ordinary church member. Every priest, moreover, at that time subversively took orders from the hierarchy of the Pope. One might suppose that in view of such a situation, Luther might have been content to stir up the preachers of local congregations to exercise their right and duty of judging all doctrine and practice on the basis of Holy Writ. But, no; he exhorts the common Christians

also, and shows them from the Scriptures, that not only their pastors but they themselves must on the basis of Scripture judge doctrine and practice. We see this, for example, in his essay entitled "That a Christian Assembly or Congregation Has the Right and Power to Judge All Doctrine, and to Call, Install, and Dismiss Teachers . . . 1535."—St. L. Edit., X, 1538ff. In this essay Luther says:

"The word and teaching of men have decreed and ordained that doctrine should be judged alone by bishops, theologians, and councils; what they have concluded should be accepted by the whole world as correct and as articles of faith, as it is proved sufficiently and daily by their boasting of the Pope's spiritual rights. You hardly hear anything else but this boast, that it is their right and power to judge whether a matter is Christian or heretical; and the common Christian is supposed to wait for their judgment and then adhere to that . . ." (What Luther has to say to this, in more detail, has been shown in the article, "What Has the Rank and File to Say?", in the February issue of **The Confessional Lutheran**.)

Dr. Walther has similarly said:

"All members of a congregation must strive to grow, and be enriched, in all utterance and in all knowledge (II Pet. 3:18; I Cor. 1:5) that they may not remain children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine (Eph. 4:14; Heb. 5:12), but try and judge by the Word of God the doctrine preached to them (Acts 17:11: 'They searched the Scriptures daily whether those things were so'; Matt. 7:15, 16; I John 4:1: 'Beloved, believe not every spirit but try the spirits whether they are of God'; I Cor. 10:15.)" **Walther and the Church**, p. 102.

Instead of speaking of "bishops, theologians, and councils," as Luther does, we would in our day say: officials, theologians, professors, and conventions. These do not alone have the right and duty to judge doctrine. Thus applying Luther's instruction to our day, we may well profit thereby. Even so Dr. Walther ("the greatest disciple Luther ever had in the world")* followed Luther and instructed us. Both Luther and Walther simply applied the words of Christ and of the Apostles and Prophets. Luther's essay of 1523, to which we have referred, is full of Scripture proof for what he says. Dozens of proof passages are used in that essay.

In application, here and now, we might briefly conclude the matter which is the subject of discussion in this article by saying that not only the rank and file pastors but especially also the rank and file members of our local congregations must awake and be stirred up to do their duty and exercise their right relative to judging all things on the basis of Holy Writ. Thus judging the St. Louis union articles of 1938, pastors and congregations can hardly arrive at any other conclusion than that those articles must be rescinded. It is clear from God's own Word that the rank and file pastors and congregations have both the right and the duty to pass judgment on the far-reaching union articles referred to. The only other choice is to fail in a God-given duty.
G. S.

◎ The Marxist View of Christianity

A discussion of the subject which we have undertaken to discuss could hardly be considered even remotely complete without at least a few additional remarks regarding the Marxist view of Christian faith and of Christian ethics. We shall, therefore, adduce an official pronouncement or two regarding these matters.

Religious Faith

Under the heading "What is Religion Good For?", Lenin, god of the godless, cites a voice that was to be heard in the **Moscow Gazette**, in the days before the Bolshevistic Revolution in Russia, when there was still a conservative press and a campaign against religious radicalism in that country, as follows:

"They call our faith a delusion!! They mock at us because, thanks to this 'delusion', we fear and avoid sin, and carry out our obligations uncomplainingly, no matter how severe they may be, because we find the strength and courage to bear sorrow and privations, and forego pride in times of success and good fortune."

Lenin then brings this sneering retort:

"So this is what it is, is it? The orthodox faith is dear to them because it teaches to bear misfortune 'uncomplainingly'! What a profitable faith it is, indeed, for the governing classes! In a society so organized that an insignificant minority enjoys wealth and power, while the masses constantly suffer 'deprivation' and bear 'severe obligations', it is quite natural for the exploiters to sympathize

* Dr. Th. Buenger in **Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly**, Jan., 1941, p. 100.

with a religion that teaches us to bear 'uncomplainingly' the woes of hell on earth, in the hope of an alleged paradise in the skies." (**Religion**, by Lenin, p. 35f.)

No matter what the subject or the given situation, Marxism, in accord with its achromatopsy, its complete monochromatic color-blindness, can only see red. All else is beyond its perception. It is of no use to protest that all of the ills of life are by no means of a governing class's making. It is of no use to protest that Christianity teaches us to bear also the abuses of that most oppressive of all governing classes — the soviet socialist class. It is of no use to protest that it was a people steeped in religion that revolted against British tyranny in the American Revolution* and based its Declaration of Independence on faith in a Creator who equally endowed men with the inherent rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. It is no use protesting that the abolishment of slavery, particularly through the Civil War in America, was brought about not by a class struggle, emanating within the enslaved class itself, but by influences emanating within higher ranks of society which had nothing to gain by the liberation of slaves, and by such very influences as Marxism seeks to destroy and to abolish forever from this still fair earth.** It is of no use to speak of sin and its universality. For Communism does not believe in sin at all. It is of no use to ask: what of Christian patience and fortitude and the resignation of Christian faith in the prospect of relentless death, or uncontrollable illness, or congenital defectiveness which is beyond human help? It is of no use to ask Leninists: what, in view of such situations, has your vaunted dialecticism to offer? Marxism simply

* Cp. e. g. Patrick Henry's "give me liberty or give me death" speech (Speech on a Resolution to put Virginia into a State of Defense): "It is only in this way that we can hope to arrive at truth, and fulfill the great responsibility which we hold to God and our country. Should I keep back my opinions at such a time, through fear of giving offense, I should consider myself as guilty of treason towards my country, and of an act of disloyalty toward the Majesty of Heaven, which I revere above all earthly kings." Denny, American Public Addresses, p. 33 (Our emphasis.)

** Cp. Abraham Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address. *Ibid.*, pp. 192-194.

is not interested, and cannot be interested, in offering anything in view of such situations. Its only interest is to destroy. And it wants to destroy, above all, Christian faith.

Far from Christian faith's being an instrument of oppression, its very existence is dependent on its clinging to the divine assurance "Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men," and to Christ's equally assuring "If ye continue in my Word, then are ye my disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (I Cor. 7,23; John 8,31f.) Yet, despite the fact that this vision of Christian faith has been made so plain that he that runneth may read it, it must forever remain the mystery of mysteries to anti-God Marxism, even as it has proved the mystery of the ages to everyone who chooses to remain without God and Christ and hope in the world, while proving at the same time to the enlightened Christian mind a revealed and blessed mystery that *lightens every step on the way of life*.

Such sneers as those of Lenin are by no means anything new. They are not the product of an enlightened Twentieth Century. When the Gospel began to be preached to the world in the heyday of the old Roman Empire, heathen philosophers (who, however, still believed in gods, or in a God unknown to them, Acts 17,23) derisively pronounced Christianity a religion for the unfortunates. Such proud men unwittingly accorded high praise to the Gospel, and in some measure furnish a reasonable proof for its divine origin. For a religion which can give no comfort in the day of sorrow cannot be of God. But a religion which has a word of comfort in every need must be of God, who alone can give a remedy for every heartache. And there is not a sorrow in this wide world but that the Bible has a word peculiarly adapted to give consolation to it.

(To be Continued)

—P. H. B.

**ACCEPTANCE OF THE ST. LOUIS
UNION ARTICLES OF 1938 MUST
BE RESCINDED**

THE CONFESSIONAL LUTHERAN

Published In The Interest Of Ecumenical Lutheranism

MOTTO: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."—I Cor. 1, 10.

REV. PAUL H. BURGDOFF
Editor, Clinton, Iowa

REV. J. BUENGER
Assistant Editor

REV. C. M. GULLERUD
Contributing Editor

REV. ARTHUR E. BECK, Business Manager, Foley, Minnesota

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IN THIS ISSUE: A God-Pleasing Union—A Church's Public Doctrine—A simple Definition of Unionism—What Is Church Fellowship?—Why?—"The Question Concerning the

Anti-Christ—What of It?—"Personalities" in Religious Controversy—For the Record—More on Inter-Synodical Conferences—The Marxist View of Christianity.

● A God-Pleasing Union

"Now the God of all patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."—Rom. 15, 5, 6.

Much has been written in our Lutheran Church concerning Paul Gerhardt and his forceful doctrinal hymns. Much has been said about the severe trials which God permitted to come upon this devout Christian during his faithful ministry here upon earth. What is perhaps not so well known about this staunch defender of orthodoxy is the fact that when he lay upon his deathbed his chief concern was for his son, his only remaining child, that he might avoid the pitfalls of unionism. In his last will be admonished this his child, Paul Friedrich, concerning unionists: "They seek temporal things and are true neither to God nor to men." (Meusel's **Kirchl. Handlex.**, Vol. II, p. 743.)

If ever this warning advice was in place, it is in place today. Now that there is everywhere about us a mad scramble for union. While it is true that we must fellowship those who are of the same mind with us, yet we must first of all be certain that we "all speak the same thing."—I Cor. 1, 10.

We are to be "likeminded," that is, to say, we can and should be based upon the Biblical

foundation, which is the God-given unifying organ of Christendom (not merely its "fundamental" doctrines), and be so united in a Spiritwrought faith, that we think one and the same thing together with others in matters of Christian conviction. Since our thoughts are expressed in words, these too, are to be such (especially in our express confessional statements) as to show that we are clearly agreed. Vague expressions—terms that can be interpreted in different, contradictory ways—must be avoided. Misunderstandings and disagreements creep in when the same terminology is employed but when at the same time not the same thing is meant. "Likeminded" means agreement not only in words, but also in the interpretation and understanding of those words. This understanding must be so complete that in the eyes of our God it is as if "one mind and one mouth" were speaking to Him.

This "likemindedness" must, however, not be judged according to mere human standards. Mere human standards demand that we have blind confidence in men, that we compromise, that we overlook "small doctrinal errors," that a majority is to be the deciding factor also in doctrinal matters. But these are merely human standards to which you and I are inclined by nature but from which we must be purged by the word of truth.

Christ's standard for achieving a God-pleasing union is quite different. Instead of urg-

ing false confidence in men here, He tells us that by nature all men are sinful, not worthy of any trust, and insists on the placing of our whole confidence and full trust in God and His Holy Word. All other confidence here is misplaced; it is a building upon quicksand. We are admonished: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding." Prov. 3, 5. Or again: "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord." Furthermore, Christ's standard does not tolerate compromise. The Christian religion is a religion of totalities: It emphasizes the **total** depravity of man; it assures us **complete** pardon for **all** sins; we have in Christ an **all-sufficient** Savior; it demands full acceptance of **all** teachings of Holy Writ; it demands that **all** interpretations (no matter by whom they are made) be **wholly** in agreement with the Bible itself and not only in harmony with the statement of other men; it insists on a **total** subjugation of our own will to every truth in Scripture. The Bible is not merely the first truth, the first form of faith and life, leaving to "scientific" processes its further development. No, it is the first and last truth. It contains all the counsels of God unto salvation. The inventions of man, so far as the way of salvation is concerned, have no significance whatsoever in the sight of God. Rev. 22, 18, 19.

Our Lord never condoned overlooking "minor doctrinal errors." He tells us that not an iota of Scripture dare be tampered with. Irrespective of persons, He condemned all errors. When He was counselled by the Apostle Peter, in a well-meant but mistaken devotion and zeal, to spare Himself, He said: "Get thee behind me, Satan! Mt. 16, 23. When His mother assumed the right to advise the Son of God at the wedding of Cana, He refrained from using the endearing term "mother" and spoke the kindly reproving word: "Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come." John 2, 4. Errors that are directed against God and His Word must be denounced, no matter how trivial they may appear, whether men like it or not. We dare not be pleasers of men, nor fear conflict.

Thus Christ shows us that when the Word of God is assailed, it is an entirely different thing from what it is when our own persons are attacked. In the latter case we are admonished: "Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?" I Cor. 6, 7. Parti-

cularly when our persons are attacked because of our adherence to God's Word and Christ's cause we must gladly and willingly bear suffering. I Pet. 2, 19, 20. We may not be obliged and privileged to die for our Savior, but we are to live for Him. Many of us have had the honor of being called "arrogant," "odorous," "stiff-necked," "heresy-hunters," "separatists," "schismatics" etc. for Christ's sake. But when God and God's Word are assailed, we are confronted by a wholly different situation. A God-pleasing union must insist on "like-mindedness."

For a long time such "likemindedness" has existed within our beloved Synodical Conference. Due to the acceptance of the 1938 union articles, there are strong indications that the visible line of cleavage between orthodoxy and heterodoxy as between us and others might soon change if we are not on our guard. There is a definite likemindedness on the part of those who will not accept the Declaration of the A. L. C. and other matters contained in the 1938 articles of agreement. On the other hand, there are to all appearances other trends of mind (divergent from one another again) among those who seem willing to accept the Declaration and all that goes with it. It is now up to the individual conscience, bound by the unchangeable Word of God, to judge in which case union would continue to exist according to the mind of Christ, and in which case its continuance and augmentation would be according to mere human standards.

The purpose of any contemplated true union must be that we "with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Co-operative work in foreign mission fields, in institutional work, the removing of schismatic offense from the eyes of the world, uniting all who go by the name Lutheran, must remain by-products in our union endeavors. "That they may be one even **as we are one**" (John 17, 22) must always be our prime motive in all our union work in the Church of God.

Anyone can readily see that a church union in which all errors are denounced, where no compromise is allowed, where everyone is willing to suffer slander and ridicule for the truth's sake,—that such a God-pleasing union can only be brought about by the merciful hand of our God.

May the God of all patience and consolation grant all of us to be likeminded one toward another **according to Christ Jesus**, that we may with one mind and one mouth glorify our heavenly Father.

A. E. B.

A CHURCH'S PUBLIC DOCTRINE

We Missourians cannot consider it improper when our body is judged by its preachers, and indeed according to its individual preachers. Our body is, for instance, rightly judged in accordance with what is preached by our pastors in San Francisco, or in New Orleans, or in New York, or in Chicago. It is not necessary for any one to hear all of our pastors, in order to be able to say what our Synod teaches. No. An ecclesiastical body must permit itself to be judged by everyone of its public teachers. And we, as a Synod, assume a guarantee, so to say, for every preacher we, therefore, also first examine preachers carefully, before permitting them to assume office. We recommend them to our congregations for a call only then when we have examined them as to whether they are able to teach the true doctrine in all things. And if a preacher becomes defective, then we as a body discipline such a preacher. We then either set him right again, in which case he remains with us; or we on the other hand do not succeed in setting him right, in which case he is excluded.

Even so our body is also judged according to what, for instance, its theological professors publicly teach, and especially also by what they write. The position of our Synod is for example rightly judged by what is published in the *Lutheran Witness* and in the *Concordia Theological Monthly*.* No member of Synod can say: What does it concern me what the *Concordia Theological Monthly* says or what is written in the *Lutheran Witness*. If some one is of the opinion that what has been stated in these publications is not right, then he has the sacred duty to announce himself. This alone is in keeping with the idea of the Christian Church. For God, precisely, does not want it to be the case that one teaches this, another one that, within an ecclesiastical body; on the contrary, all should agree in all doctrines. To this end He has given us a Scripture which is clear in all things. "Be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."***

And as we permit ourselves to be judged, thus we again judge others. If in a church-body three fourths of its preachers taught rightly, one fourth however, would teach false doctrine, and this one fourth were permitted thus to go on, then this one fourth would deprive the entire body of its orthodox character.—Dr. F. Pieper, *Lectures on the Evan-*

*Dr. Pieper had said "Lutheraner" and "Lehre und Wehre." We substituted the present English equivalents.

** 1 Cor. 1, 10.

gelical Lutheran Church, II, p. 94. (1891.)***
P. H. B.

⊙ A Simple Definition of Unionism

"Unionism is not any single false doctrine, but a false principle; a false tendency in many different lines of church work and teaching."

"Unionism is fellowship between churches without corresponding harmony and unity of confession and faith. It is toleration of false doctrine, mutual recognition as brethren of the faith by those who push aside and ignore differences in doctrine. This mutual recognition as brethren of the faith is then given expression when members of different confessions band themselves together in one congregation, unite in church federations, or at least practice pulpit, altar, or prayer-fellowship, and undertake united efforts in church work. The essential thing in unionism is that differences in doctrine are minimized and ignored and as a matter of principle the sharp distinction between truth and error is removed."

"It is a deadly poison in which true Christian life cannot grow and flourish, for the simple reason that it does not have access at all times to the refreshing waters of life, since, as a matter of course, unionism must turn off more or less of this healing stream of God's grace in the interest of church union."

Dr. F. Pfotenhauer. (Cp. *Proceedings, Southern Nebraska District, 1936*, p. 17.)

P. H. B.

⊙ What Is Church-Fellowship?

1. Prayer-fellowship.

One of the barriers to union between the Missouri Synod and the A. L. C. which centers about the caption of our article concerns the matter of prayer-fellowship. With respect to the relation between prayer-fellowship and church-fellowship, one of the leaders of the A. L. C. states, in one of the most recent official publications of this church: "There remains only the question whether occasional private prayer-fellowship with Lutherans, with whom one is not in church-

***Similarly, Dr. Th. Grabner in 1918: "In the Missouri Synod the general body holds each district and holds itself responsible for any error in doctrine or breach of Lutheran practice committed by any pastor, professor, teacher, or layman in synod, and each district holds all others responsible in the same manner. All this in obedience to Matt. 28, 20; Rom. 16, 17; Tit. 3, 10; Matt. 7, 15. Jesus Christ wants no errorists in His Church, and does not want Christians to fellowship with them." *The Merger: An Analysis. (Taking Cognizance of Overtures to the Un-Merged.)* C. P. H. 1915. p. 26.

fellowship, or with members of other churches, is to be labeled Unionism. If prayer-fellowship is as exclusive as church-fellowship, this is, of course, the case. But are they really identical? For me it is impossible to assume that they are unless more pertinent Scripture proof is adduced than has been done in the past. ("In the Interest of Lutheran Unity" by M. Reu, L. B. C. 1940. p. 38.)

It is fair to assume from this statement that since the A. L. C. does not consider prayer-fellowship to be as narrow as church-fellowship, they wish to reserve for themselves the privilege of holding that occasional private prayer with professed Christians of another faith, is not church-fellowship and therefore not Unionism. The passages which we have used to show that prayer-fellowship is church-fellowship, are unacceptable to them as proofs for this contention. It is therefore in place that this part of our Confessional position be examined to see if we have indeed been guilty (as charged) of misinterpreting and misapplying Bible passages.

The passage which has been used most frequently by us in this connection and which, in turn, on the part of the opponents, has been placed most frequently under fire, is Romans 16, 17. It is difficult to understand why this passage should be unacceptable as a proof text to show that we should avoid promiscuous prayer (whether public or private). This passage clearly commands us to avoid joint worship with those who hold doctrines which diverge from the prophetic and apostolic writings. This passage does not in any way restrict itself to public worship, but includes all forms of worship (whether public or private). And prayer certainly is an act of worship as our own synodical Catechism clearly states. Indeed, that every conceivable form of Unionism is not mentioned by name, but that our passage is so broad that it includes them all—in this we see the great wisdom of God. If God meant to restrict Rom. 16, 17 to **public** worship, He would have said so. Had He meant to exclude prayer-fellowship, whether public or private, He would have made this clear by saying so. He simply and clearly says: "Mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them." Those who will read into this passage the meaning that we are to avoid such, in **public** worship, **only**, are placing something into it, which does not appear in the text. Incidentally those who are contending that Rom. 16, 18. is to be viewed as restricting and limiting the meaning of verse 17 are also guilty of false exegesis; for verse 18 clearly does not

limit verse 17, but simply tells us what those **are** who cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrines which we have learned. If it seems too much for us to call all these belly-worshippers who cause offences contrary to the doctrine of Holy Scripture in any point, then let us remember that it is **God** who says so—God who is concerned that no small heaven shall enter among us to leaven the whole lump. This passage, Rom. 16, 17, in spite of all attempts to minimize, weaken, or invalidate its full meaning still stands as the clear voice of God forbidding joint worship or church work of any kind with those who hold to doctrines different from those delivered unto us by God Himself in the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures. Every attempt to weaken this or similar passages or to narrow their intended scope, can only result in laxity and liberalism which will be regulated by the whims, fancies and moods of men. It is not for us to say what is required by way of loyalty to the truth, but that is for God to say, whose Word it is. If the restrictions He has made in the matter of church-fellowship seem to be too stringent, then we should at once bring the Old Adam into subjection and remember that God knows best how His name is to be hallowed.

The stock argument of the unionist who defends prayer-fellowship with those of another faith, is that since we admit that there are Christians also in other communions where the Gospel is still taught, therefore we should also be ready to recognize them as such at least by praying together with them privately. This argument is manifestly based upon a fallacy. God alone can look into the hearts and see who they are who are His children. This is as true of the Roman Catholic believer in Christ as it is of our own church members. The only way we have of judging with whom we may fellowship and whom we may recognize as brethren, is by their profession of faith and their life. If the profession of faith and the life of the individual do not agree, then even in the case of our own members we exclude them from our fellowship after patient and repeated admonitions have proved fruitless. In the case of members of other communions who profess that they have the same faith as we, there we have the right to ask that they bring their profession of faith and their life into agreement by leaving their heretodox affiliation before we fellowship with them. To refuse fellowship to such is the work of love, for by such refusal we demonstrate most effectively how wrong it is for them to remain in the camp of false teachers where according to

their own profession, they do not belong (taking here the case of those who profess to be one with us.) To join with him in prayer as a brother in faith would be to weaken him in his determination to follow God's Word which demands separation from false teachers. By refusing such fellowship we are not saying that he is not before **God** a believer, but we are saying that we cannot recognize him as a brother in faith, until the fruits are clearly in evidence.

There have been those who have contended that joint prayer with Christians of other denominations is countenanced in our synodical Catechism in Question 222 which in explanation of the words "OUR Father" in the Lord's Prayer says:—"All believers are in Christ the children of one Father and should therefore pray for and **with each other.**" That this does not refer to external prayer-fellowship (whether public or private) is clearly shown by the fact that it is manifestly impossible for us to join in outward or vocal prayer with "All believers in Christ." The statement in our synodical Catechism merely calls attention to the fact that whenever we pray the Lord's Prayer, we are in **spirit** praying with all true believers in Christ wherever they may be. If this were not the sense then it would be utterly foolish for us to pray "**Our Father**—" when we pray the Lord's prayer alone, but then we should have to say simply, "**My Father**—" When we pray this prayer in outward communion with each other, then God's Word clearly shows us that we are to pray it only with those whom we, publicly as well as privately, can recognize as brethren in the faith. Our **Concordia Cyclopedia** states on page 600. "There is one rule which permits the Christian conscience to be sure of divine approval; join in prayer and worship only with those who are united with us by a common faith and profession." At its last meeting, the Synodical Conference clearly showed that it considered prayer-fellowship to be church-fellowship.

2. Cooperative Endeavor in Church Work

Among the barriers to Union between the Missouri Synod and the A. L. C. must be noted not only the erroneous views of the latter as to what is **necessary** for church-fellowship, but also their erroneous view as to what **constitutes** church-fellowship. The view which the A. L. C. officially holds on this matter is strikingly illustrated in Resolution No. 4 of the Sandusky Resolutions of the A. L. C. (Oct. 1938) with reference to fellowship with the Synod of Missouri. "That we understand why the Missouri Synod is for the time being not yet ready to draw the logical conclusion and

immediately establish church-fellowship with our church. We, however, expect that henceforth by both sides the erection of opposition altars shall be carefully avoided and that just coordination of mission work shall earnestly be sought." The request which is here made is tantamount to asking the Missouri Synod to change the view which it has heretofore held on church-fellowship; for the Missouri Synod has always regarded the coordination of Mission activities as the actual **practice** of church-fellowship. In effect this resolution states that A. L. C. understands why we cannot immediately establish church-fellowship with them and yet they ask us to do that which by us has always been considered the actual practice of church-fellowship.

To further illustrate the erroneous attitude within the A. L. C. on this phase of church-fellowship and to bring into evidence a statement of our attitude towards the same, we quote an instance which is so closely analogous to the present case as one would ever hope to find. In the **Lutheran Standard** of August 21, 1926 it was reported that at the Northwestern District of the former Ohio Synod, expressions were made which favored the move at that time to take part with a joint Home Mission Committee of the U. L. C., Augustana Synod, and the Norwegian Lutheran Church, the purpose of the Council being: "To coordinate the mission activities in such a way that existing opposition work be eliminated as much as possible and avoided altogether in the founding of new work." (Words practically identically with what the Sandusky Resolution No. 4. asks us to do.) Now to this stated purpose of the forementioned Council, Dr. Theo. Graebner in his "Problem of Lutheran Union" page 103, writes: "Now we of the Missouri Synod would look upon such cooperation as not so much an indication as actual demonstration and practice of church-fellowship." The continuation of the previously mentioned report reads: "As to other joint endeavors, the position was taken that every thing which must be interpreted as pulpit and altar-fellowship should be avoided." Here Dr. Graebner states: "It is clear that we have not the same definition of fellowship." Yes, it is clear that we did not have the same definition then, and it is clear that we do not have the same definition of church-fellowship now.

To illustrate how the A. L. C. carries this erroneous attitude into actual practice, we need only refer to their membership in the National Lutheran Council where they are

joined, for instance, with the U. L. C. in co-operative church work, but at the same time officially disavow pulpit and altar-fellowship with the same. This is not considered unionism by them but it is so considered by us, and therefore it was truly stated in our **C. T. M.** that our aloofness from the National Lutheran Council is due "to the desire to be found faithful to the Word of our Great God." Vol. IX page 386. Our **Concordia Cyclopaedia** has well stated: "Religious Unionism consists in joint worship and **work** of those not united in doctrine."

When Satan tries to draw the doctrinally disagreed together in **joint endeavor**, he is using the psychological approach to doctrinal difference. The result will be that as the bodies which are doctrinally disagreed, find that their cooperative endeavors are productive of friendship, mutual respect and good feelings of comradeship, It will not be long before they begin lightly to gloss over the doctrinal differences that exist, and for the sake of working together under a common flag, are ready to make one concession after the other. In such cases it is the truth that always loses out and this is exactly what Satan started out to accomplish. Joint endeavors with those with whom we are not in full doctrinal agreement may seem ever so innocent and insignificant in the beginning yet danger is lurking at every turn. That there is danger in seemingly small beginnings is so strikingly brought out in the case of Cain to whom God said in warning: "Sin lieth at the door."

C. M. G.

Why?

1. Why is the Question whether or not the assumption of errors in the Bible is divisive of church-fellowship so important?
2. Why must the idea of a dissimilar conduct of natural man over against the grace of God be rejected as a false doctrine?
3. Why is the "psychological mystery" a destructive error?
4. Why must the old difference regarding objective and subjective justification not be overlooked?
5. Why is the difference regarding the Church not merely a difference in terminology but really a difference in doctrine?
6. Why is the difference regarding the doctrine of the Ministry still unsettled?

7. Why is the declaration on the part of the A. L. C. that the Lutheran doctrine of Sunday is among them "doctrina publica" unsatisfactory?

8. Why is it wrong to term the Lutheran doctrine of the Anti-Christ an "historical judgment"?

9. Why can the expectation of a future, more literal, fulfilment of II Thess. 2, 1, conversion of all Jews, and a physical resurrection of the martyrs before the last day not be considered as non-divisive differences under the present circumstances?

BECAUSE—

1. Because by ignoring this difference between the A. L. C. and the Synodical Conference we would be opening the door to Modernism in our midst.
2. Because it is a human invention which answers in an underhand way the question "cur alii prae aliis?", which Scripture does not answer.
3. Because it perverts the Scriptural doctrine of original sin by denying that man is by nature inclined to all that is evil and contrary to God's Will, scil., that he is inclined to wilful resistance.
4. Because it concerns the very heart of the Gospel. For without objective justification, subjective justification would no longer be by grace alone.
5. Because at the bottom of the divergent terminology there are two different conceptions of the Church itself, the genuinely Lutheran conception, and that of certain Neo-Lutherans.
6. Because one side holds that the keys are given to all Christians as such, hence to every congregation of Christians, while the other side has always insisted that they are given only to "the Church in its totality", that is, to congregations in conjunction with their clergy.
7. Because they have always declared, and never withdrawn the principle, that in their midst the error of J. Gerhard and others has **equal right** with what they now term their "doctrina publica."
8. Because according to the Scriptures the agreement between fulfilment and prophecy is valid Scriptural proof (Acts 9, 22; 18, 28); in fact, the only possible proof.
9. Because the Iowan wing of the A. L. C. (though rejecting all **coarser** forms of chil-

iasm) has always defended a more subtle eccliasm, of which these three freak ideas are essential features, and because to this day they make toleration of these errors a condition of church-fellowship.

J. B.

● The Question Concerning the Antichrist

Is It An "Open Question"?

Thus the **Declaration** of the American Lutheran Church refers to the matter of Antichrist's identity in the first sentence of its sixth section. It states:

"When considering the question concerning the Antichrist, the future conversation of Israel, the resurrection of the martyrs, and the millennial reign of Christ," etc.

It puts the Antichrist (i. e., the identity of Antichrist) into one category with the future conversion of Israel, the resurrection of the martyrs, and the millennial reign of Christ.

Since the A. L. C. does not confess, but rather grants toleration to, the "doctrines" concerning a future conversion of Israel, a resurrection of the martyrs before the Last Day, and a millennial reign of Christ, the A. L. C. obviously regards those "doctrines" as open questions, that is, as matters which a church can neither affirm nor deny. And since the A. L. C. puts the Antichrist on a level with the aforesaid matters, it apparently regards also the "question" concerning Antichrist, that is, the identity of Antichrist, as an open question. That was the position of the Iowa Synod which is now merged with other synods in the A. L. C. For the Iowa Synod stated:

"It does not satisfy the Missouri Synod that one recognizes in the papacy a part of the kingdom of the Antichrist, as the Apology to the Augsburg Confession says, and in the Pope a forerunner of the last and real Antichrist who, according to Scripture, is to have and to exercise his terrible power only a short time. . . . Our Synod. . . wants to leave open the question whether the last and complete fulfilment of what Scripture foretells of the Antichrist is still to be expected or not. Those who have gained from Scripture the conviction that the **final** fulfilment of these prophecies is still to be expected in the future, should have the same right in the Church as those who believe themselves to have the conviction that everything is already

fulfilled in the Roman Papacy." (*Kirchliche Zeitschrift*, 1904, p. 23, as quoted in *Lehre und Wehre*, L, 489-490.)

The **Declaration** (VI, B, 1) takes up the "Question" concerning the identity of Antichrist again and in detail. It states:

"In regard to the Antichrist we accept the historical judgment of Luther in the Smalcald Articles (Part II, Art. IV:10) that the Pope is the very Antichrist (German: 'der rechte Endechrist oder Widerchrist'), because among all the antichristian manifestations in the history of the world and the Church that lie **behind us in the past** there is none that fits the description given in II Thess. 2, better than the Papacy, particularly since the denial of the fundamental article of the Scripture on the part of the Papacy, viz., the justification of the sinner by grace alone, for Christ's sake alone, by faith alone, constitutes the worst perversion imaginable of the very essence of Christianity and inevitably carries with it the dissolution of every God-pleasing moral world-order.

"The answer to the question whether in the **future that is still before us**, prior to the return of Christ, a special unfolding and personal concentration of the antichristian power already present now and thus a still more comprehensive fulfilment of II Thess. 2 may occur, we leave to the Lord and Ruler of the Church and world history." (*Proceedings*, 1938, p. 225)

In these two paragraphs the A. L. C. does not reject the old view of the Iowa Synod, but rather affirms it. The A. L. C. does not regard "the historical judgment of Luther" as Christian **doctrine**.^{*} This is clear from the reason for which the A. L. C. accepts that judgment or opinion, and from the second of the aforesaid paragraphs. But that the Roman Papacy is the Antichrist, is Christian **doctrine**, and not merely the judgment or opinion of Luther. Of course, one could call this particular doctrine an opinion of Luther, without denying thereby that it is doctrine; even as in Christ's day one could have called the doctrine that Jesus is the Christ an opinion of Peter. For Jesus certainly asked for an opinion when He said, "Whom say ye that I am?" However we are by no means satisfied that the A. L. C. considers Luther's opinion of the Papacy to be Christian **doctrine**. We would have been satisfied with the official position of the A. L. C. if it had omitted the

^{*}This is important to remember when considering the "attitude" of the A. L. C. **Declaration** toward the **Brief Statement** of the Missouri Synod's Doctrinal Position. Cp. *General Proceedings*, 1938, p.225f.—P. H. B.

second of the aforesaid paragraphs, and had said in the first paragraph (at least, in effect): "In regard to the Antichrist we accept the historical judgment of Luther in the Smalcald Articles (Part II, Art. IV:10) that the Pope is the very Antichrist (German: 'der rechte Endechrist oder Widerchrist'), as correct, **because the Papacy fits perfectly the description given in II Thess. 2; and we reject every other judgment as to the identity of Antichrist.**" But this the A. L. C. does not say. It accepts Luther's opinion for another reason, namely, because the Papacy fits the description given in II Thess. 2 **better** than any other antichristian manifestation of the past. There have been many such manifestations ("many antichrists," I John 2, 18) including the Papacy. All of them fit the description given in II Thess. 2 more or less. The Papacy, however, fits that description better than the other do, and for this reason the A. L. C. accepts Luther's opinion. To her, Luther's opinion is just that, and not Christian doctrine. To her the Papacy is not necessarily the Antichrist, but only the worst of the many antichrists who have arisen hitherto.

According to the **Declaration's** second paragraph on Antichrist his identity is an open question. The Papacy may or may not be the Antichrist according to the A. L. C. The representatives of that church feel that "a special unfolding and personal concentration of the antichristian power already present now and thus a still more comprehensive fulfillment of II Thess. 2 may occur" "in the **future that is still before us**, prior to the return of Christ." This special unfolding and personal concentration of the antichristian power already present now is not necessarily some development within the Papacy, as some of us have thought. For, certainly, "the **antichristian power** already present now" is present not only in the Papacy, but in all present "antichristian manifestations." Yes, even though antichristian power were now present only in the Papacy, yet this would not necessarily confine "the special unfolding and personal concentration" of that power to some development in the Papacy. Besides, the A. L. C. has no need of "supplementing" our **Brief Statement** to the effect that new developments may still occur in the Papacy, since that possibility has never been denied by our synod. The purpose of Section VI, B, 1 of the **Declaration** is rather to make the identity of Antichrist an open question, and thus to remove from the doctrinal basis for fellowship the validity of the following utterances of our **Brief Statement**:

"As to Antichrist we teach that the prophecies of the Holy Scripture concerning the Antichrist, II Thess. 2, 3-12; I John 2, 18, **have been fulfilled** in the Pope of Rome and his dominion. All the features of the Antichrist as drawn in these prophecies. . . are the outstanding characteristics of the Papacy (No 43) Not to be included in the number of open questions are the following: the doctrine of the Church and the Ministry, of Sunday, of Chiliasm, and of **Antichrist**, these doctrines being **clearly** defined in Scriptures" (No. 44. Our emphasis.)

But why make so much ado about the Antichrist? After all, his identification is ordinarily non-fundamental to saving faith, inasmuch as many believers have been saved without identifying the Antichrist. Answer: as a rule the doctrine concerning the Antichrist is not so prominent among us. Its unusual prominence is occasioned by the fact that our synod, in a measure, sanctioned the **Declaration** on this point by stating that a difference of opinion here need not be divisive of church-fellowship.

The Unmistakable Marks of the Antichrist

St. Paul speaks of Antichrist as "that man of sin" and "the son of perdition" in II Thess. 2, 3. At first glance one might think that the Apostle is speaking of an individual. However, Scripture sometimes speaks also of a number of persons as if they were an individual, when what is true of all is true of each of them.** Moreover, the term "antichrist," like the term "Christ," is not a personal name, but rather the name of an office.***

What are the marks of Antichrist? They are all given in II Thess. 2, 4. Here St. Paul describes Antichrist as him "who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." In other words, Antichrist opposes all that is called God or that is worshipped, and even exalts himself above it, thus acting as if he were God Himself. Especially by this mark is he to be recognized. Other marks are secondary, and serve chiefly to guard us against mistaken identifications. Among these are the fact that he is connected with a great apostasy and the fact that he sits in the temple of God.

"All that is called God" is not God Himself; for the Apostle would hardly speak thus of

**See Gen. 49 where Jacob foretells the future of each of his twelve sons, that is, of them and their descendants, though Jacob does not mention the latter.

***Cf. I John 2, 18 where the term "antichrist" is applied in a secondary sense to many individuals.

God. "All that is called God" does not even include God, because He is not to be placed on a level with others who are merely called gods. "All that is called god" is not and does not include idols or false gods, since it would be no sin to oppose and to exalt oneself above them; but the apostle describes a sin here. "All that is called God" is all those who are **approvingly** called gods in **Scripture**. Scripture calls certain human beings gods, not because they are treated as idols, but because they perform **divine functions by divine right**. In short, Scripture calls those gods, who, in accordance with God's command, act in His stead. Who are they? Jesus says, "He (God) called them gods, **unto whom the word of God came,**" John 10, 35. These were the prophets and apostles who spoke and wrote by divine inspiration and thus in God's stead. Because they spoke (and still speak in Scripture) for God, they are called gods. Furthermore, Scripture calls civil rulers gods. For instance, Moses says, "Thou shalt not revile the gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people," Ex. 22, 28. Civil rulers act in God's stead when, for instance, they take vengeance on evil-doers (Rom. 13, 4), which is a divine right (Rom. 12, 19). Because they act in God's stead, civil rulers are called gods. So then "all that is called god" is: all the Scriptural writers who, under God, rule in the religious sphere, and civil rulers who, under God, rule in the political sphere. When Paul adds, "or that is worshipped," to describe further "all that is called god," he does not refer to **divine** worship, but to such worship or high honors is due to God's functionaries.*****

Accordingly, Antichrist exalts himself above the apostles and prophets (God's Word) and above all civil rulers. In other words, he claims supremacy in both the religious and political worlds. He pretends to be Master of the Biblical writers and King of kings. In short, Antichrist claims to be equal with Christ Himself (Matt. 23, 8; Rev. 17, 14). He is the pretended vicar or substitute of Christ, who is the real ruler of the church of the world. At the same time Antichrist opposes God's Word and civil rulers. He is connected with a falling away or apostasy from the Christian faith.

Despite his pretended supremacy over and his opposition to civil rulers, Antichrist is not himself a civil ruler, a political dictator. No, he sits in the temple of God. That is, he rules over believers who are the temple of

God (II Cor. 6, 16).***** In other words, Antichrist is a religious leader, a church-ruler. The fact that such a person can rule over believers is explained by his deceptiveness (II Thess. 2, 10).

One must then look in the visible Church for Antichrist. One must look for some leader in the Church, who claims supremacy in the religious sphere and in the political sphere. One need not look far. Anyone who is acquainted with the acts and utterances of the Roman Papacy must admit that every pope has been a church-ruler and has claimed to be the vicar of Christ on earth, the chief of the apostles and prophets, and the head of civil rulers. Besides, the Papacy is intimately associated with apostasy—the apostasy—from the Christian religion; for the Papacy denies and even curses the central doctrine of the Gospel, that a man is justified before God only through faith in Christ. As for the "lying wonders" of Antichrist (II Thess. 2, 9) it is sufficient to refer to the Roman mass in which, according to papal doctrine, bread and wine are changed into Christ's body and blood and sacrificed repeatedly by priests for actual sins.

Knowing all this, how can anyone still doubt that the Roman Papacy is the Antichrist of the ages? How can this matter still be an open question?

In its Union Article of 1938 our Synod has, in a measure, sanctioned the idea that the identity of Antichrist is an open question. Also for this reason those articles should be rescinded. Even though no church-fellowship is ever established on the basis of them, God alone knows what else is being done and will be done on that basis, and into what unnecessary difficulties it will bring us, so long as it stands. At best it makes us reeds shaken in the wind, so far as the doctrine concerning the Antichrist and some other doctrines are concerned. May God give us grace to see these things!

D. L. Pfeiffer.

❁ "What Of It?"

This is what certain hecklers said during a conference. A speaker was expressing this idea: the A.L.C. holds that the Roman papacy may be the Antichrist, but that the Antichrist may also turn out to be some individual who is not a pope at all. "What of it!" said the hecklers. We have met people who **doubted**

*****Cf. Luke 14, 19, which shows how the translators sometimes used the word "worship."

*****On the special meaning of "sit", see Ps. 2, 4; 29, 10; Dan. 7, 9, 26.

that the papacy is the Antichrist. But this was more than an expression of doubt. It was an expression of **indifference!** "What of it!" What difference does it make whether we hold that God's clear prophecy is fulfilled or not? If it makes no difference now, when will it? Logically, never. And if never, why did God give us the prophecy? He could well have said nothing concerning Antichrist, if it makes no difference whether we recognize him or not. And yet the revelation of him is a specific sign of the Judgment Day! 2 Thess. 2:3. "What of it!" Suppose that some one had said that in answer to that question in Matthew 11:4! For the principle would have been the same. This indifference is bad in Christians; it is much worse in their teachers! It fills with dismay. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump."

D. L. Pfeiffer.

⑦ The Question of "Personalities" In Religious Controversy

Confession of truth and rejection of error must in a certain respect be wholly of a personal character.

I say, in a certain respect.

It must, of course, remain a fact, that one accepts the truth not for the sake of any person who confesses it, but for truth's own sake. It must likewise remain true that one rejects error for its own sake, and not for the sake of any person who may happen to proclaim such error and whom we may dislike. Thus one must remain purely objective in this respect.

In another respect, however, one must, on the other hand, be wholly personal.

How is this?

This happens to be the case because we do not encounter error in the abstract, but in concrete form, in connection with **certain persons**. Error has its apostles, and truth has its apostles. And so then, one can disavow error in this world in no other way than by simultaneously disavowing those who proclaim error, those who teach error. And one can confess truth in no other way than by espousing, at the same time, those persons who proclaim the truth.

Look at the Scriptures.

When the Apostle Paul wants to keep Christians from fellowship with **error**, then he inculcates upon them to separate them-

selves from such **persons** as proclaim error. For, thus he writes to the Romans: "Now, I beseech you, brethren, mark them (i. e. certain **persons**) which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned." And St. John writes: "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed. For he that biddeth him God speed" (bids such particular persons God speed), "is partaker of his evil deeds," that is, of his evil cause, of error.

A position in which one would indeed reject error but fellowship with disseminators of error,—such a position does not exist. Error is accepted, and it is rejected, in connection with such persons as identify themselves with error. So it is also with the confession of truth. Therefore the Apostle Paul not only admonishes Timothy: "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord," but he also adds the noteworthy words: "nor of me, His prisoner." Here the Apostle Paul demands of Timothy also that he espouse his, Paul's, person. He urges Timothy: If you want to confess the true Gospel, then you dare neither be ashamed of me. You dare not say then: Paul I do not know, Paul does not concern me. You must rather say: Paul is a true Apostle of Jesus Christ. And if you will not do that, then you are, in the person of the Apostle Paul, denying the true Gospel.

Dr. F. Pieper, **Lectures on the Church**, 1890-1891, II, p. 95-97.

P. H. B.

⑧ For The Record

It is reliably reported that the Springfield-Decatur (Ill.) Conference resolved on January 8 to notify the President of Synod that it was not satisfied with the union documents of 1938. "We see things countenanced there," the report before us states, "which Scripture clearly rejects." . . . "True charity demands that, when a man is wrong, especially in matters referring to God and to man's salvation, you should tell him so." **Religious Unionism**, by Prof. J. H. C. Fritz, p. 12 . . . In the **Lutheran Sentinel** for Nov. 12, 1940, there is an article, titled "False Tolerance," treating of charity, which is well worth reading . . . "It means that I am proving my friendship now by telling you an unpleasant truth." W. D. Oreutt, in **The Bachelots**, p. 171 . . . (The last three items were submitted by Harry H. Smith, Brownsville, Texas.) . . . The January issue of the **Theologische Quartalschrift**

☉ More On Inter-Synodical Conferences

A brother in Northern Wisconsin writes us, off the record: "Sometime in September I delivered a paper on the doctrine of Election before the inter-synodical conference of the Chippewa Valley (A.L.C. and Syn. Conf.). The presentation was not acceptable to one of the pastors of the A.L.C., because it condemned the **intuitu fidei theory** (election in view of faith), which this particular pastor declared to be the only Scriptural and Lutheran position. He refused, however, to write a paper for our next meeting, setting forth where I had deviated from Scripture.

"My observation thus far," continues this brother, of whom we know that he has all along been very charitably inclined toward the A.L.C., "has been that there are sincere men in the A.L.C. who no longer hold to the false doctrines taught by their respective synods; others (perhaps the great majority) do not know what it is all about; and a few of them purpose of reading essays on hymnody, clerical collars, and related subjects." . . . A Midwest correspondent, member of another synod, suggesting that the way of the unionist is ever devious, submits the following as being applicable to the situation:—

It's a wriggle in and a wriggle out,
And always keeps a man in doubt
As to whether the snake that makes the
track
Is aheadin' south or coming back.

He closes with "Yours for straight lines." . . . **There are men who have aspired to be reckoned among the fathers of their church, but who must in actuality be counted among its problem children.**

P. H. B.

(Wisconsin Synod) contains an excellent article on the Doctrine of the Antichrist that leaves no room for doubt; also a number of vital reports on the Lutheran union movement . . . Whoever wants to keep up with what is going on in our Church these days should read the article, "The So-Called Lutheran Pastor," by Rev. N. M. Madson, in the Jan. 13 issue of the **Lutheran Sentinel** (Norwegian Synod) . . . A brother in the East has written us: "Have you observed, in certain parts of the country, that the same men who got together with the ALC and ULC a year ago to discuss doctrinal differences have, even now, progressed so that doctrine has been laid aside? They are now starting little conferences with men of other synods for the

are still as far removed from true Lutheranism as were their fathers and grandfathers."

We pass these remarks along for whatever they may be worth.

P. H. B.

☉ The Marxist View of Christianity

(Continued)

Ethics

We believe that man is a morally responsible being even on the basis of his natural knowledge of God and his conscience. As Christians, more particularly, we root our conduct in God's Word, as revealed in the inspired Scriptures.

What does Marxism think of ethics, and more particularly of Christian ethics or morals? There is no room for them in its philosophy of life. If the first Table of the Decalog, that which deals with God directly, is particularly offensive unto Marxism, the second, which inculcates love of our fellowman, is like unto it.

But we shall again let Marxism speak for itself.

Lenin, in his monograph on religion, has put the views of Marxism regarding ethics on record as follows:—

"In what sense do we deny ethics, morals?

"In the sense in which they are preached by the bourgeoisie, which deduces these morals from god's commandments. Of course, we say that we do not believe in god. We know perfectly well that the clergy, the landlords, and the bourgeoisie all claimed to speak in the name of god, in order to protect their own interests as exploiters. Or, instead of deducing their ethics from the commandments of morality, from the commandments of god, they deduced them from idealistic or semi-idealistic phrases which in substance were always very similar to divine commandments.

"We deny all morality taken from superhuman or non-class conceptions. We say that this is a deception, a swindle, a befogging of the minds of the workers and peasants in the interests of the landlords and capitalists.

"We say that our morality is wholly subordinated to the interests of the class-struggle of the proletariat. We deduce our morality from the facts and needs of the

class-struggle of the proletariat." (**Religion**, p. 47f.)

Aside from the fact that one must here again note the single track mind of Communists and Socialists, one is disposed to ask: And what sort of morality could that be which you deduce from the class struggle of society? One feels the necessity to ask further: If you have any morality (which Marxism hasn't), has it any constancy? On what authority is it based? Why should it be accepted at all?

Marxism has no answer for any or all of such questions. It simply demands that we give up all that we have, and wait and see whether perhaps it may eventually develop something in place of what we are to give up, freely admitting that that is something which it itself does not yet know.

What a naive demand!

Truly, Marxism is a negative way of life. It is a philosophy, an ideology, a religion of fanatical destruction. And above all, true religion, morality, and law must go, if Marxism is to prevail. For they are to the Marxist so many bourgeois prejudices, which are the root of all evil in this world, and which cannot, therefore, be endured.

To make clear, at least to some little extent, what all of this means practically, we shall quote the words of others. In their brochure, **Socialism in the Test Tube**, George McCready Price and Robert B. Thurber rightly state:

"Socialists do not believe in any fixed and unchangeable standard of right and wrong. . . . They believe only in **social** morality, and class morality. Social morality has to do with a man's conduct as it affects others; nothing else matters, so they say. What a man does by himself (or together with others, with their consent—P. H. B.) in the way of the most disgusting impurity, gluttony or bestiality, is his

own concern, and has no moral significance than the way he combs his hair when out hunting. They have done their best to shake off any such feeling as "Thou God seest me"; and have little sympathy with the cry of horror from Joseph, 'How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?' According to Socialistic teaching, Joseph was a fool. For all unions between the sexes which do not result in offspring are wholly indifferent and without any moral significance." (p. 68.) It should be added that offspring can be avoided by abortion, and that abortions are as freely sought and dispensed among Marxists as are aspirin pills among us. It is no more uncommon for a Communist Comrade of the fairer sex casually to tell of her latest abortion over a cup of tea in the land of the Soviets than it is for someone to tell of his most recent illness here.

August Bebel, outstanding Socialist of a past generation, says, in his book, **Women and Socialism**, which has gone through many editions, numbered by the thousands: "The gratification of the sexual impulse is as strictly the personal affair of the individual as the gratification of every other natural instinct." Similarly, Belford Bax, author of **Ethics of Socialism**, says that the sexual act "does not concern morality at all. It is a question simply of individual taste." (p. 126.)***

But all of this is such a big subject that it shall have to be discussed by itself at a later time.

P. H. B.

***Cp. Price and Thurber, **Socialism in the Test-Tube**, p. 68. —

**ACCEPTANCE OF THE ST. LOUIS
UNION ARTICLES OF 1938 MUST
BE RESCINDED**

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THE CONFESSIONAL LUTHERAN

Published In The Interest Of Ecumenical Lutheranism

MOTTO: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."--1 Cor. 1, 10.

REV. PAUL H. BURGDORF
Editor, Clinton, Iowa

REV. J. BUENGER
Assistant Editor

REV. C. M. GULLERUD
Contributing Editor

REV. ARTHUR E. BECK, Business Manager, Foley, Minnesota

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No. 6

IN THIS ISSUE: A Momentous Convention—What Are We Facing?—Our Modern Interpreters—The Most Dangerous Thing—The

American Lutheran Church's "Organic Whole" of the Bible—The Dogmatic Historical Background of the Present Union Movement—Who Is The Antichrist?—That They May Be One.

● A Momentous Convention

It will be a most important convention of our Church that will be held at Ft. Wayne when delegates of the Missouri Synod meet there in June. Mistakes have been made during the past years that might spell disaster for our church as the church of the pure Word if they are not properly rectified. In a well meant but mistaken zeal for union with other Lutherans, an untenable doctrinal basis for future fellowship with the American Lutheran Church was adopted at the 1938 convention of Synod. Official publications of the Missouri Synod, in a well-intended but mistaken zeal to uphold those resolutions, have been guilty of the most flagrant misrepresentation of fact, not to mention outright appeal for toleration of error. The question confronts us whether we shall have the courage to face such facts. We have a face to save, to be sure. But infinitely more important than that is the question: shall truth be preserved unto us and our children? That is really the question which must be decided at Ft. Wayne. May God grant us grace that we face the issue which confronts us squarely and without wavering.

—P. H. B.

● What Are We Facing?

In the book of Reports and Memorials for the forthcoming convention at Ft. Wayne we

note with much alarm certain proposals which would "re-interpret" Article VII of the Constitution of the Missouri Synod, which stipulates that with respect to the individual congregation's right of self-government Synod is but an advisory body. The "interpretation" to which we refer, and which would actually make that paragraph mean that synod is not but an advisory body, is found in Memorial No. 503 (pp. 172-175), and in the Report of the Handbook Revision Committee, No. 714, (pp. 228-246).

I

From Memorial No. 503 we cite especially its proposed first resolution, which reads: "Resolved, That Synod declare with finality that our church government is synodical in fact as well as in name, that its resolutions and decisions have binding force, etc." (P. 173.) That such an "establishing the true meaning of Article VII of Synod's Constitution" represents an outright effort completely to reverse this vital and Biblically sound article of the constitution of the Missouri Synod is so obvious as to need no proof.

We might add that the argument that "A congregation's right of self-government does not include any right to trench on matters of faith, doctrine, practice, or discipline, since the Word of God is the only rule and norm and governs a congregation in these matters" (which matter is completely safeguarded in Article II and Article VI of Synod's Consti-

tution) **has equal force as applied to Synod.** We are moved to ask, therefore: Why advance such an argument in support of the proffered proposition "that Synod, with respect to the individual congregation's right of self-government,.....acts in an advisory capacity only in connection with those matters that are strictly a matter of self-government; that is to say, such matters as do not include or involve faith, doctrine, practice, or discipline"? (P. 174) The question at issue is not so much one of trenching on doctrine and related matters as it is one of judging such matters. We, therefore, wish to say here and now, with all possible emphasis, with our sainted Dr. Pieper:

"The right of judging on questions of doctrine does not rest with the Church at large only, nor with Synods only (representing the Church of a certain country), nor with the clergy alone, but with all individual Christians, since upon all Christians is laid the duty of distinguishing pure teachers from deceivers, and of departing from error, Mt. 7,15; Rom. 16,17. To take away from Christians the right of judging on questions of doctrine, is an abominable outrage, and the origin of popery." (Distinctive Doctrines and Usages, p. 134.)

It might be well to quote Dr. Pieper further, moreover, when he aptly says regarding the demanding of obedience beyond the limits of God's Word:

"Beyond these limits obedience must neither be **demanded** nor **rendered**.....In regard to synods.....if they go beyond these limits.....by making obligatory upon the consciences of Christians what is a matter of indifference, all Christians are bound to disregard them. There is absolutely no authority in the Church beyond the Word of God, and there is, consequently, no authority on earth that could make the least thing, not prescribed by Christ, obligatory upon a Christian's conscience."

Illustrating the point under discussion, Dr. Pieper, citing Luther, pertinently says:

"The pope, says Luther, has the power of laying a fast upon **himself**, but not on some second person in the whole world. This holds true concerning all matters of indifference and with all persons."

And finally, Dr. Pieper summarily warns us concerning **synods** that they must "carefully keep within the sphere of **advisory** bodies. The local congregation is the highest divinely instituted tribunal in the Church, as

is seen from Mt. 18,17." (Loc. cit., p. 134-137.)

II

As for the report of the Handbook Revision Committee, No. 714, we call attention particularly to the paragraph on "Reasons for Suspension," p. 240, which reads:

"When any member of Synod, voting or advisory, is accused of false doctrine, a life which is not in harmony with demands of Holy Scripture, or a deliberate refusal to abide by the Constitution, By-Laws, and other regulations of Synod, steps shall be taken by the District officials to suspend such person or congregation from membership in Synod."

Unless we may assume that we are confronted by a mistake of print here, we first of all call attention to a very evident blunder of the committee which drew up this paragraph. The blunder we have in mind is this that it is proposed that when some individual or congregation is merely "**accused**" of certain things, steps should be taken to suspend such person or congregation from membership in Synod! Certainly, the committee in question does not actually mean to propose what has been cited here from its report! One of the very objects of Synod is — to quote from Article II of its Constitution—"the protection of pastors, teachers, and congregations in the performance of their duties and the maintenance of their rights." Accordingly, when any member or member congregation of Synod is accused of one or the other things specified, steps shall be taken by the respective officials to **investigate** the case. In case some accusation should be found to be false, as frequently happens, Synod actually has the obligation **to protect** the individual or congregation in question. It is, moreover a rule of life, even outside the Church, that a person is innocent until proved guilty. We can, therefore, not believe that this paragraph was meant to read as it does read.

However, quite side from the blunder to which we have called attention, this sweeping proposal goes entirely beyond the bounds of what a synod can demand of men who have been purchased by the blood of Christ so that they may serve Him alone. Whether so intended or not, it is of a piece with the totalitarian trend which is rampant in the world today. There were very good reasons why our founding fathers, who had profited by bitter totalitarian experiences even a hundred years ago, made the statement concerning the relation of Synod to its members as found in

Article VII a vital part of their synodical constitution. It is one of our most precious heritages. And the same reasons which prompted it, exist today. We dare say they exist even in a measure beyond that which has been usual in Missouri Synod circles during the many years of its existence. To deprive Missourians of Article VII of their constitution by a "re-interpretation" of it in the manner which has been proposed, would mean to deprive them of their very birthright as a synod. Article VII must be retained as it reads, and it must be left to mean what it was meant to mean, in all its simplicity. It reads:

"In its relation to its members the Synod is not an ecclesiastical government exercising legislative or coercive powers, and with respect to the individual congregation's right of self-government it is but an advisory body. Accordingly, no resolution of the Synod imposing anything upon the individual congregation is of binding force if it is not in accordance with the Word of God, or if it appears to be inexpedient as far as the condition of a congregation is concerned."

Any encroachment on that constitutional article concerning the relation of Synod to its members must be resisted with all the power at our command. It must be resisted in its beginning. For it represents a threat to the very life of our synod as a synod worthy of its name.

—P. H. B.

⊙ Our Modern Interpreters

This is a day of "interpretation"—interpretation which so "interprets" the most simple truths and the most fundamental principles as often to make them mean the exact opposite of what they were originally intended to mean and what they, in fact, do mean.

It is not only the world which so "interprets" what is not convenient or acceptable to it, as it reads, today. Such "interpretation" has found its way also into the Church, and it works wonderful magic there.

Conveniently forgetting that we are to understand the Bible as it reads, taking it at its face value, churchmen read it as though it had a waxen nose after all — to cite Luther — which may be turned this way and that. The process begins with the very first chapter of Genesis as it is found on the first page of Scripture. By a mere bit of "interpretation" the six morning-evening days of Genesis be-

come so many vast periods of time, and presto! the door has been opened at least to some accommodation to a theistic view of evolution within the Church. And the process does not cease until the very last book of the Bible, the Revelation of St. John the Divine, has been so "interpreted" as to make room for almost every manner of divergent view regarding Christian faith and hope. The closing chapters of Revelation are so "interpreted" as to assure us, contrary to Scripture, that the end of all things is not at hand; that a future millennium must yet intervene before the final judgment, so that the Church and the world can still feel secure for a while, and that we can and should indeed still look for better days to come before preparing to lay our work by as a Church and welcome the coming of our Lord to a world which has had its day and has run its course. The prospect of a resurrection of the martyrs, in time, on the basis of an "interpretation" of Rev. 20, 4, strengthens the case of such interpreters, as does the expectation of a conversion of the Jews, arrived at on the basis of an "interpretation" of Rom. 11, 25f, and a still future revelation of the real antichrist on the basis of an "interpretation" of II Thess. 2. By a similar touch of the interpreter's magic hand the invisible Church becomes visible, and thus the process goes on endlessly.

And now, the Missouri Synod Constitution. As noted above, Article VII of that constitution is to be so "interpreted" that the statement that Synod is but an advisory body is to mean that it is not but an advisory body, but a body the decisions of which have binding force.

Where is this all to lead to? We honestly fear that in accordance with such "interpretation", if it is allowed to go on, the Missouri Synod will not long be the Missouri Synod anymore, to suggest nothing more alarming than that. And lest that happen ere long, we plead that we stop listening to "interpretations" and return to the simplicity of Christian faith and hope and love, based upon the clear, uninterpreted Word of God and upon the simple fundamental document which our Synodical fathers bequeathed to our church in its constitution and on the basis of which it has so wonderfully flourished nearly one hundred years.

—P. H. B.

⊙ The Most Dangerous Thing

We were seeing one of our church's noted leaders off on his train in the railroad depot

of one of our large cities. There were a few minutes to spare, and our revered companion took time to look over the station's magazine rack. Grabbing the latest copy of a "Breezy Story" type of magazine, he rushed to the clerk at the counter, and assuring her that such a magazine was not fit to sell, he asked her to have it removed from the display rack. The clerk's assurance that she would look into the matter was, no doubt, cause for considerable satisfaction to our respected friend, as it was in some measure also to us. For certainly, it is hard to say what harm is being done today by "literature" of the sort mentioned.

And yet, when we later discussed this incident with another noted leader within our church, he gave us something to think about. "Bad as it is," he insisted, "such trash is not the most dangerous thing for our people. Decent people will shun it. They will not read it at all." And then he concluded significantly: "The most dangerous thing for our people is the kind of thing that is good enough for them to read, but which is at the same time filled with a bit of subtle poison that will destroy their soul."

Well-spoken words, which are capable of the widest application in the field of the Church and its doctrine and work.

The most dangerous theologian is not the outright modernist who is well known for his unbelief. True Christians will shun such a one and give him the widest berth. The most dangerous theologian is the one who is close enough to be lent our ears, but who at the same time admixes to his teaching just a bit of soul-destroying error, just a bit of erroneous leaven here and there.

The most dangerous magazine, or pamphlet or book, to our people, is the religious one—Lutheran, if you will—with the views of which they have so much in common that they will read it—perhaps time and again—but which at the same time is infected with a small bit of contagious virus.

The most dangerous document imaginable is that document which seems to speak the language of our Church and to approach our teachings sufficiently to claim our serious consideration as a doctrinal basis for fellowship, but which on closer inspection is so freighted with subtle error, misleading misrepresentations, omissions, and evasions, as to make it possible for a whole host of soul-destroying errors to lurk within and behind its reassuring statements.

Such a document is the doctrinal basis for future fellowship with the American Lutheran Church, with the ALC Declaration embedded in it, which was adopted by the 1938 convention of the Missouri Synod. Adoption of that doctrinal basis must be rescinded. Its errors are too obvious today to be any longer retained.

—P. H. B

● The American Lutheran Church's "Organic Whole" Of The Bible

The American Lutheran Church officially maintains a doctrinal error in its Declaration when it says that the books of the Bible constitute "an organic whole without contradiction." (I. b.) The former Ohio and Iowa Synods claimed the reality of such a harmonious whole or totality of Scripture for use in understanding the Scriptures. And in Dr. Ren's pamphlet, "In the Interest of Lutheran Unity", officially published and widely distributed by the A. L. C. in 1940, this same doctrinal error is upheld.

Against this error the Missouri Synod declares in its Brief Statement: "With the Confessions of our Church we teach also that the 'rule of faith' (analogia fidei) according to which the Holy Scriptures are to be understood are the clear passages of **the Scriptures themselves** which set forth the individual doctrines. (Apology. **Trigl.**, p. 441, par 60; Mueller, p. 284.) The rule of faith is not the man-made so-called 'totality of Scripture' ('Ganzen der Schrift')."

Here we have a positive and also a negative sentence, both of which refute the error which is the subject of this short article. First let us see more fully what we mean by our sentences.

We understand the Scriptures according to the Scripture passages which treat of the individual doctrines. In each case, we know and understand what sin is, who Christ is, what faith is, how we are justified before God, and any other truth of Scripture, according to the passages of Scripture which treat of sin, of Christ, etc. Considering the salvation of man, there is a relation between these doctrines, and all of them have the one purpose of saving the sinner, even as the whole Bible has that one purpose. But we learn to know the individual doctrine on the basis of those passages which treat of that doctrine.

From the Scripture passages which tell us why some are converted we learn that the

cause of conversion is purely and only the grace of God, that before his conversion the Christian was just as evil in will and conduct as the one who is not converted. From the Scripture passages which specifically treat thereof, we know that some remain unconverted because they resist the work of the Holy Ghost, they reject the grace of Christ. Acts 7, 51; Matt. 23, 37. Each truth we learn to know on the basis of those passages which speak of that truth. Humbly and with child-like simplicity it behooves us to accept Scripture as it reads.

The doctrine of the election of grace is clearly and simply taught by the various passages which treat of that doctrine. Those whom God elected will certainly be brought to faith and to everlasting life — purely and solely by His grace, for Christ's sake. Eph. 1, 3-7. On the other hand, Scripture just as clearly tells us that others remain in unbelief and are eternally lost purely and solely by their own fault. They refuse to hear the Word of God and resist the Holy Ghost. Acts 13, 46.

What we teach about the resurrection of the body, about the Second Coming of Christ, and other such things concerning the end of the world, we base in each case upon those Scripture passages which treat of the individual doctrines. And wherever we find a passage which seems dark to us, we let the clear passages which treat of the same thing shed light on such so-called "dark" passages.

(Note: For lists of proof passages for each of the doctrines already named and for an exposition of these doctrines, the Brief Statement will be of great service to any reader. My point now is especially only to say that we take each doctrine only from those passages of Scripture which treat of that doctrine, or, Scripture truth.)

Our rule of faith is the Scriptures themselves, not reason, not the enlightened reason of the Christian or of the theologian. The reason of the Christian is enlightened by the Word of God. In the light and by the guidance of the Word of God, the reason of the Christian is of good service in many ways. But just as soon as the Christian would attempt by his reason alone to judge and explain Scripture, without using the Word itself, he would fail just as miserably as does the unbeliever. It is certainly a contradiction to say: My reason is enlightened by the Word of God, and then claim: I can judge by my reason what the Scriptures mean. No, our reason is only a tool, an instrument, for use

in accepting Scripture as it reads. The Christian, and especially the theologian, if he is truly orthodox, will say: "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Ps. 119, 105.

The negative sentence quoted from our Brief Statement rejects the man-made so-called "totality of Scripture", "Schriftganzes," as a rule of faith or as a rule by which to understand the individual truths or passages of Scripture. This "Schriftganzes," "totality of Scripture," is an impossible, unusable, illogical, un-Scriptural thing which no man ever did use or ever did explain! But it is important that we have stated our rejection of it because of what is hidden under this expression and because it is used as an excuse for false procedure in explaining Scripture. It is the primary cause for the errors of synergism and Calvinism. Every Missouri Synod Christian must constantly be on guard against the error represented by this expression because we are all inclined to use our human reason as a judge of Scripture.

We reject the use of a "totality of Scripture" because we understand Scripture according to the Scripture passages which treat of the individual doctrines. The whole Bible is our light, we use the whole Bible, we do not reject any part of it. Yes, if we would reject even one word of it, we would disrupt the foundation of our faith. Jesus said: "The Scripture cannot be broken." John 10, 35. That means that we must accept all of it. We must reject none of it, as did the Jews when they refused to believe the words of Scripture which should have shown them that Jesus is the Promised Messiah, the Son of God. The Bible is like a mountain range with its peaks and valleys, forests, grassy plateaus, and deposits of precious stones and metals. God created the mountain range, and it is there for the study and use of mankind. God has given us the 66 Books of the Old and New Testament, and the whole thing is there for our study and use, just as it is. The Bible is like the lights of the heavens, sun, moon, and stars, all of which have their individual places and courses, and they are created to serve us. God has given us the Bible to be our light and guide day and night. But just as no man can use a whole mountain range or the lights of the heavens at one and the same time, so no man can use a so-called "whole" of Scripture at one and the same time.

No man can apply all the truths of the Bible at once. No man can amalgamate all the doctrines of the Scriptures into a whole or totality for use in throwing light on any sin-

gle passage or truth of the Bible. We do not even test one truth of Scripture with every other truth of Scripture before we accept that one truth, neither is that possible. The length of the creation days is not established by comparing it with the doctrine of the person of Christ or with passages which treat of the eternity of God. We learn to know the length of the creation days by studying those passages which treat of that subject. Thus we can make examples of all the doctrines of the Bible and show that none of them is understood according to an imagined whole of Scripture, and none of them needs to be compared with every other truth of Scripture in order to know the one doctrine in part or in its full scope.

We have said that such a totality of Scripture is a man-made thing. It exists only in the imagination. It is abstract philosophy. It is one of the tools which Satan has used to confuse and deceive men. It is a destructive error which sets aside the Word of God.

Now let us see what those say who uphold this evil and powerful error.

ROMANS 12, 6

St. Paul writes: "Let us prophecy according to the proportion of faith." Rom. 12, 6. Some say that this prophesying is the work of those special prophets in the first congregations who had special revelations from God. These people got up in the congregation to edify others with their individual revelations. (See also I Cor. 14) Others maintain that these words of St. Paul here in Romans 12, 6, are a rule for all preaching or exposition of the Scriptures. Then we could paraphrase the passage and say: Let us always preach according to the proportion of faith. I am not here going to discuss this question. It is not important now.

Another word of this passage that comes in for much discussion is the word faith. Does Paul here mean to say that we should preach according to our personal faith or does he mean that we should preach according to the faith, or, the Scriptures, which are the basis of all true faith. We know that all preaching, or prophesying, must not be contrary to the Scriptures. If we would paraphrase this passage this way: All preaching must be according to the Scriptures, we would certainly find general agreement. But it would not be acceptable to say: All preaching must be according to what the individual believes. However, I choose to say no more on this question now, that is, the question of what the word

faith means as it is used in this passage, Rom. 12, 6.

It is the word "proportion" which causes most, and real, trouble. The original Greek word which we have translated as proportion is "analogia". In the English we use the word "analogy". Also in the German we use the same word "Analogie". Was it right to translate the Greek word "analogia" with the word proportion? Should the translators not rather have translated and said: Let us prophecy according to the analogy of faith? If that had been done, the difficulty would still remain. We would still ask: What does "according to the analogy of faith" mean? Discussing that question would or could lead us far afield. Here and now I desire to set forth what one thing it does not mean. And the purpose of this refutation is to show that the A. L. C. cannot rightly use this passage to maintain its "harmonious organic whole" of Scripture as a supernorm for all Scripture interpretation or for the exposition of certain passages which may be declared to be "dark" passages.

Anyone who goes to the trouble of reading over the history of the intersynodical meetings between Synodical Conference Lutherans and the Ohio-Iowa Synods about the year 1904 knows that the latter contended for a harmonious organic whole of Scripture as a supernorm for all Bible exposition and used Romans 12, 6, in defense of their argument. At the Detroit, Mich., intersynodical meeting in 1904 Dr. Stellhorn said: "For all interpretation we use a rule, and that is the Scriptures as a whole or the total of all articles of faith, Catechism doctrines, fundamentals. These form a harmonious whole or system, which is the norm for the interpretation of the individual passages. Romans 12, 6, requires this." (Translated from *Quartalschrift*, I, 106.) To Dr. Stellhorn and all who agree with him, analogy of faith means a "harmony" of the doctrines of Scriptures which is recognizable to the Christian, especially to the theologian, and which is to be used in Bible exposition. They would paraphrase Romans 12, 6, to read: The exposition of any individual passage of the Bible must agree with the "harmony" of the main doctrines. And they claim that just this is said in Romans 12, 6.

The Declaration of the A. L. C. does not use this passage. The official pamphlet of the A. L. C., "In the Interest of Lutheran Unity," also does not use this passage. But the same concept is in them both, as we shall see later. And at an intersynodical conference at Jackson, Minn., Oct. 17, 1939, the A. L. C. spokesmen used Rom. 12, 6, throughout in their at-

gument to maintain such a "harmonious" organic whole as a supernorm for Bible exposition.

Dr. Stoeckhardt in his Roemerbrief, p. 569, very simply destroys this point of the argument of the A. L. C. or the former Ohio-Iowa Synods by saying "According to the analogy means: in relation to, nothing more. A thing can stand in relation to something else, but not to itself. So it can be meant only that this prophecy should stand in the right relation to faith, but never that faith should stand in relation to itself, that the different parts of faith stand in relation to one another." Dr. P. E. Kretzmann says the same when he declares in a mimeographed article on this subject: "Another wrong thought is that which severs analogian from *kata* (according to) and explains it (analogy) as a congruence or harmony in which the individual articles of faith stand toward one another."

Our position, stated in a few words, is this: Analogy of faith or Romans 12, 6, does not mean a "harmonious" organic whole of Scripture which is to be used as a supernorm for the interpretation of individual Bible passages. We reject such a philosophical concept, which is often based on a false exegesis of the word analogy in Romans 12, 6.

As proof for its "organic whole without contradiction"; in speaking of the Bible, the A. L. C. lists John 10, 35, "The Scripture cannot be broken." We may all well apply this passage if we mean no more than that no part or word of the Scriptures must be denied or rejected. "All Scripture is profitable." But when this passage is used in an attempt to demonstrate a harmonious organic whole of the Bible in the A. L. C. sense as a supernorm for Bible exposition, we reject such a use of this passage. It does not mean that. But the official A. L. C. pamphlet, "In the Interest of Lutheran Unity", declares, p. 58: This passage "hardly can mean anything else but this: The Old Testament Scripture is a wonderful unity without contradiction — complete harmony — coherent, unified whole in which there are no contradictions." We can agree also to this if thereby is meant that before God, who has given the Scriptures and certainly cannot contradict Himself, the Old Testament and also the whole Bible is a unified harmonious whole. But the dispute is on the question as to whether we mortal beings with our finite minds can so grasp it. St. Paul says: "Now we know in part, and we prophecy in part." I Cor. 13, 9.

In the A. L. C. pamphlet which has been

mentioned an attempt is made by its author to prove with John 10, 35, that we must harmonize Scripture. His exposition is this: When the Jews took up stones to stone Jesus as a blasphemer according to Lev. 24, 16, Jesus quoted Ps. 82, 6 to them. (P. 58) But here we do not have a case of harmonizing two Scripture passages or the whole Old Testament. The Jews had rightly applied Lev. 24, 16, if Jesus were a blasphemer. Without comparison or harmonizing, that single passage alone would have given the Jews the right to stone Jesus if He were not the Son of God, which He rightly claimed to be. Where the Jews were wrong was in that they did not accept Jesus as the Son of God. He repeated now that He is the Son of God, sanctified and sent into the world by the Father. He reminds them that even the judges were already called "gods". Why should they want to stone Him who is far more than the judges? And if they would search the Scriptures and believe them, they would know Him as the Son of God.

Romans 12, 6, and John 10, 35, cannot be used as a basis for the claim that the whole of Scripture must be for us a recognizable harmony and organic whole which must be used as a supernorm for Bible exposition.

The A. L. C. pamphlet, p. 38, speaking of non-fundamentals, says: "The interpretation of Scripture texts dealing with non-fundamentals must not run counter to the analogy of Scripture — It is the **entire** Bible which must be consulted in the process." On p. 48 it is said that the meaning and application of certain Scripture passages depends on "the light which the whole of Scripture throws upon them." (My emphasis.) On page 75 rules are given for exegesis of the Scriptures and the fourth and last one reads: "The sum total of the perspicuous passages is to be, as it were, the guardian of truth so that a disagreement between the individual exegetical results in explaining an obscure passage and this sum total" indicates incorrect conclusions.

The above quotations sufficiently show that the A. L. C. operates with a "totality of Scripture" as a rule of faith or as a rule for Bible exposition, which rule we reject.

On page 75 of the cited pamphlet the author says that the Formula of Concord applies such a rule in refuting the thesis of Flacius that original sin belongs to the essence of fallen man. "Here," he says, "the F. C. proves the untenability of the thesis by showing that it is in conflict with the doctrine of creation, incarnation, sanctification, and the final resur-

lection." The F. C. does what is said in the foregoing sentence. (F. C., I, 2; **Trigl.**, 779) But the procedure of the F. C. does not prove the A. L. C. rule for exegesis. The F. C. names individual doctrines and says that the Flacian error conflicts with them, separately, not as an amalgamated whole. It gives the Flacian error four different blows and destroys it. The use of this sentence from the F. C. as a proof for a "harmonious" organic whole of the Bible as a supernorm for Bible exposition has always been and is now rejected in our Synodical Conference circles.

What one passage of the Bible needs to be compared with the Bible as a whole? The most rabid harmonizer, the most radical proponent of a harmonious organic whole of the Bible, has never used his own invention in Scripture interpretation. It simply cannot be done, because there is no such thing for such a use. One could write a whole book on this matter and fill it with quotations from the writings or reports of those who attempt to maintain a "totality of Scripture" as a rule of faith. But in all the theological books in the world no man can discover a single instance where any man ever made practical use of a totality of Scripture in explaining any kind of a passage of Scripture. But since the days when Peter tried to harmonize circumcision with justification by faith, we find men in every age who attempted to make the revelation of God agree with the human reason of man, attempted to explain to human reason the mysteries of God, attempted to give answers to things which God has not revealed, and in their attempts they have often used this man-made so-called "totality of Scripture" as an excuse for their errors.

Zwingli, Calvin, and also Melancthon were plagued with this unhappy philosophy of harmonizing truths of Scripture. And there are Lutheran harmonizers now. The proud reason of man and the deceptions of Satan will continue to produce harmonizers as long as this earth stands. And there are especially two doctrines in which erring mortals constantly go astray because of the error which is the subject of this article. Those two doctrines are conversion and election. Present differences now between the American Lutheran Church and the Synodical Conference, of which the Missouri Synod is a part, have their basis in this fundamental error on the part of the A. L. C. (Note: For a discussion of the present-day differences in conversion and elec-

tion see the articles of Rev. J. Buenger published in **The Confessional Lutheran**, July to December, 1940.)

The A. L. C. maintains a harmonious organic whole of the Bible. And it uses this argument in coming to its false conclusions in the doctrines of conversion and election. But it does not use a whole of the Bible to prove its points. It uses only a few doctrines and mixes them. To set forth what should be believed about the election of grace, A. L. C. theologians and the former Ohio-Iowa leaders have habitually and consistently used passages which treat of universal grace and subjective justification to explain the passages which treat of the election of grace. Why? To satisfy the reason of man. Anyone who dislikes such a charge should carefully study what Dr. Th. Engelder has written in the **Concordia Theological Monthly**, September and October issues, 1940, under the title "Reason or Revelation?", or in the book which contains the whole of this treatise, soon to issue from The C. P. H. Press. The magazines, or the book mentioned may be ordered from Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. The section which deals especially with those whom Dr. Engelder refers to as Lutheran harmonizers should be particularly consulted.

"Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Ps. 119, 105. It is not for us to judge that light and adjust it with our human minds. "Now we know in part, and we prophecy in part." I Cor. 13, 9. But the individual truths which we know as we have them collected and set forth in the Bible will certainly and surely lead us to eternal life, even though we cannot now on earth grasp all things. If anyone consent not to the wholesome words of Christ, he is proud and foolish and ignorant in spiritual matters. I Tim. 6, 3f. We all need this instruction and these warnings. And for the cause of ecumenical Lutheranism, we can do nothing better than frankly confess the truth and discuss the differences which separate us. The A. L. C. "Organic Whole" of the Bible is one fundamental difference which needs to be eliminated before there can be any real progress towards union between the A. L. C. and the Synodical Conference.

—G. Schweikert

○ The Dogmatic-Historical Background of the Present Union Movement

(continued)

5. Objective and Subjective Justification.*

The doctrine of the objective justification of the whole sinful world through the death and resurrection of Christ is one of the doctrines which were brought back to the consciousness of Christians through the testimony of Dr. Walther after they had been all but forgotten in the Lutheran Church of America. As with the Scriptural doctrine concerning the Church or the doctrine concerning predestination, so also the doctrine of justification is in constant danger of falling in oblivion or of being vitalized through erroneous conceptions. The truths which God has revealed in Holy Scriptures are so alien to man's natural reasoning, yes, seem so contradictory to his human feeling and thought, that it is necessary to consider ever anew what the Scriptures teach if we are not gradually and imperceptibly to fall back into errors.

Now, the doctrine of Justification occupies such a central position in the body of saving truths that any error with respect to this doctrine must necessarily cause errors in other doctrines. The great controversy which arose concerning the doctrines of conversion and election and which shook the Lutheran Church of our country to its very foundations was made possible only by the fact that there was already no full agreement in the doctrine of justification. This soon became evident. Again and again, both in older and more recent days, during the course of the controversy the debate took in also the doctrine of justification and the function of faith in justification. And it was particularly the doctrine of objective justification which was attacked by Ohio and Iowa. The attack at first was vehement and vituperative, then grew feebler and more uncertain, until finally it ceased. However, until the present day we miss in the A. L. C. a clear, unequivocal confession to the true Scriptural doctrine on this point.

The *sedes doctrinae* of the doctrine under discussion, objective justification, are especially the following passages: Rom. 5, 19; II Cor. 5, 19-21; Rom. 7, 25. Let us review briefly the import of these passages.

Rom. 5, 19: **"For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the**

obedience of one shall many be made righteous." The question here is: who is meant by the 'many' who are made righteous through the obedience of Christ? Are only the believers meant who accept Christ and His righteousness, or all men? In the foregoing verses the Apostle compares the ruin which has come upon all men through Adam's offence, with the blessing which has come upon all the world through the redemptive work of Christ. He shows that the Savior through His work has not only repaired the ruin wrought by Adam's fall, but that a comparison between the ruin of the fall and the grace of redemption will show a plus on the side of grace, (V 9-11; 15-18). It is generally admitted that the expression "many sinners" in the first class of our verse designates the "many" who were made sinners through Adam's disobedience, namely all mankind. Therefore it would be arbitrary and inconsistent with the whole context to limit the "many" in the second parallel clause by a restriction to those who receive righteousness through faith in Christ. On the contrary, the "many" who are made righteous through the obedience of Christ must be the same who were made sinners through Adam's disobedience, namely all men, the whole sinful world.

II Cor. 5, 19-21: **"God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their tresspasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the Word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."** Dr. Pieper remarks on this passage (*Christliche Dogmatik*, II, pg. 411 ff): "The term *katallassein* in Rom. 5, 10 and II Cor. 5, 19 designates, as must be pointed out again and again, not a change of mind on the part of men, but something that takes place in the heart of God. God at that time when Christ offered His atoning sacrifice gave up His wrath against men. This is not a human explanation, but the Apostle's own explanation, who adds to the words, 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself' the interpretation, *me logizomenos autois ta paraptomata auton, not imputing their tresspasses unto them*, that is, even then in His heart forgiving the whole world's sin, justifying the whole world. For 'not to impute tresspasses', in the idiom of the Scriptures (Rom. 4, 6-8) is equivocal to 'forgiving sin', 'justifying' sinners."

Dr. Stoeckhardt employs the passage in the same manner (*Synodalbericht des Suedl.*

* This chapter is a translation of a German Conference paper.

Distr. 1883). He says: "The work of Christ has effected a perfect reconciliation of God with men. The work performed by Christ as the Mediator (I Tim. 2,5) between God and man was acceptable to God, even as Eph. 5, 2 it is said of Christ that He 'hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savor'. As God in grace made Christ who knew no sin to be sin for mankind (II Cor. 5,21) that is, imputed the sin of mankind to Christ as if it had been His own sin, so also He looked upon the expiation rendered by Christ as though it had been rendered by **man himself**. The Holy Spirit writes through St. Paul II Cor. 5, 14: 'We thus judge that if **one** died for all, then were all dead.' Through the suffering and death of Christ the sins of all men have been so completely atoned as if all the thousand millions of men had themselves suffered eternal torments of hell.....**In Christ God takes such an attitude toward men as though they had never offended Him by sin, as if no alienation had ever taken place between God and man.** Here the so-called objective justification is clearly taught; for if God in Christ is **reconciled** to men, if He no longer has anything against them, **then God in His heart has absolved them for their sins,** looks upon them as **just** for Christ's sake." (Quoted in Pieper, **Dogmatik**, II, pg. 312f.)

Rom. 4, 25: "**Who (Christ) was delivered for our offences and was raised again for our justification.**" The term **dikaiosis** (as Lenski also rightly says) means justification and is always an **actus forensis**. Those who deny the objective justification declare that the phrase **dia ten dikaiosin hemon**, "for our justification," refers to subjective justification by faith, the imputation of the righteousness of Christ when grasped by faith. Dr. Pieper remarks: "The force of the words **egerthe dia ten dikaiosin hemon** is abridged when restricted to subjective justification which takes place through faith. Calov, following Gerhard, sees the truth when he says of the relation of Christ's resurrection to our justification that 'Christ's resurrection has taken place with a view to an actual absolution of sin. As God punished our sins in Christ, they being laid upon and imputed to Him as our Substitute, so by raising Christ from the dead God **ipso facto** has absolved Him from our sins which had been imputed to Him and, accordingly, has also in Him absolved us.'" (Pieper, **Dogmatik**, II, pg. 380).

The objection is raised that the expression "our offences," "our justification," in this passage denote, not the offences of **all** men nor

the justification of **all** men, but the offence and the justification of the Christians. It is true that the Apostle in the context speaks of "us", of those who now stand in the faith. But it does not follow that the words in V. 26 treat of **subjective** justification of the Christians. Rather, we Christians are here offered the comfort: as **our** sins were accounted to Christ and punished in Him when God delivered Him unto wrath and death so Christ in His resurrection from the dead has been absolved also from **our** sins, so that His resurrection is actually **our** justification from sins. The Father's declaration that our sins have been atoned, paid for, and, therefore, forgiven. That the same is true of the sins of the whole world is expressly taught in other Scripture passages.

Objective justification, accordingly, is an event of past history. It took place 1900 years ago when Christ died and rose again. This justification consists in this that God imputed to Christ, as though they were His own, all the sins of the whole world and that God on account of Christ's complete payment has in the act of resurrection absolved Him, and so also the whole world, from the sins which really were our sins, so that His justification is our justification. This fact God proclaims to all the world in the Gospel.

Subjective justification must be distinguished from objective justification. It consists in this that, when a sinner accepts in faith the Word of Reconciliation and the righteousness of Christ, God accounts to him his faith, that is, the object and content of his faith, the righteousness of Christ, as his own righteousness, with the result that the sinner now **possesses as his very own** what was offered and promised to him in the objective justification, that he now **has** the forgiveness of his sins and is clothed in the righteousness of Christ as if it were his own righteousness.

This subjective justification is necessary for the reason that objective justification first reaches actual fruition in the case of the individual when he through faith personally lays hold on God's promise. If I offer a gift to a needy person it can only then benefit him when he accepts it. If he refuses to accept it, the fact still remains that the gift was offered to him, although it does not benefit him.

Moreover, this subjective justification by faith is possible only because **prior to faith** there is an objective justification, a universal reconciliation and forgiveness of sins. Whoever denies this corrupts and destroys the doctrine of justification by faith. If the reconciliation

of the whole sinful world and the forgiveness of all sins were not a completed act, how could the sinner make that the ground of his faith and confidence? He would have to believe something that is not yet reality but must first become real through his faith. And that is the position of the deniers of objective justification. To them the Gospel is not the good news of an historical fact that needs only to be accepted by faith, but only a declaration that tells him: God is ready to forgive your sins upon the condition that you believe in Christ. In consequence, to obtain the forgiveness of sins the sinner must then first be certain that he has faith and thus the certainty of forgiveness does not rest upon the firm, unerring Word of God, but upon one's own faith. Therefore also, when the sinner is assailed by doubts as to the genuineness of his faith, his certitude of his salvation collapses, for its basis is gone.

Dr. Hoenecke, therefore, says in his *Dogmatics*: "It is necessary to stress objective justification in order to safeguard the real content (**den realen Inhalt**) of the Gospel" (*Dogmatik*, IV., pg. 355.)

One who denies objective justification can consequently not teach correctly about the function of faith in justification. On this point Dr. Pieper says (*Dogmatik*, II, pg. 611): "Justification by faith without the deeds of the Law would be absolutely out of the question unless by virtue of Christ's substitutionary satisfaction the justification of the whole human race is **already existent** in the heart of God and **proclaimed as a fact** in the Gospel. All those who deny this objective justification or, what is the same thing, the objective reconciliation, must, to be consistent, also deny that subjective justification takes place through faith. If forgiveness is not objectively existent through Christ's **satisfactio vicaria** then faith must be viewed as in some way **complementary** to the merits of Christ, in other words, as a contribution offered by men (*menschliche Leistung*)."

Dr. Lenski, is, therefore, in error when he maintains that by emphasizing objective justification, subjective justification by faith is destroyed. The very opposite is the case: denial of objective justification, the truth that the forgiveness of sins already exists as a fact, robs faith of the foundation upon which it must rest. If one then still speaks of a justification by faith, then faith is no longer merely the acceptance of the righteousness and forgiveness which God offers and proclaims in His Word; for then no gift is as ever denies this objective justification, by the

yet present to be accepted, but faith itself must first induce God to forgive our sins.

Thus faith is converted into a meritorious act, in view of which, and on account of which, God **becomes** gracious to man. And the forgiveness of sin is then held in prospect for man in case he on his part fulfills the condition upon which forgiveness depends: man must first believe and then because of his faith he receives forgiveness.

But if in justification faith is viewed as a human contribution upon which the realization of justification is contingent, then justification no longer is by grace without the deeds of the law, but faith itself becomes meritorious. Then, as Dr. Pieper says, justification by faith in the sense of the Scriptures is out of the question.

It is not mere chance that the same men who assailed the Lutheran doctrine of conversion and election by grace as Calvinistic, and who harbored synergistic views with respect to the origin of faith, vehemently assailed and rejected the doctrine of objective justification. There is here the relation of cause and effect. A man who has synergistic or kindred notions in the doctrine of conversion cannot but err with respect to the place of faith in the doctrine of justification. For him faith is not simply the **organon lepticon**, the receptive instrument, in justification, but he will make of faith a condition, a human performance and contribution upon which justification and forgiveness are conditioned. God will do His part if man does his own part. The Gospel of the free grace of God, given without money and without price, needing only to be accepted, is turned into a new legal system, a rule pointing out to the sinner how he can earn God's favor and salvation. The Christian religion is turned into its direct opposite.

—J. B.

(To Be Continued)

Who Is The Antichrist?

"As to the Antichrist we teach that the prophecies of the Holy Scripture concerning the Antichrist, II Thess. 2, 3-12; June 2, 18 have been fulfilled in the Pope of Rome and in his domination. . . . We subscribe to the statement of our Confessions that the Pope is 'the very Antichrist.'" This is the confession of the Missouri Synod as given in the Brief Statement of its Doctrinal Position, paragraph 43. And to make it clear and definite that the above is a statement of **doctrine** and not just a traditional interpretation, the Brief Statement declares that the

doctrine of the Antichrist as it has been set forth in paragraph 43, is a **doctrine** clearly defined in Scripture and is therefore **not an open question**. It is not one of those questions in which we may permit varying views. This is good "old-Missourian" teaching, and we are convinced that it is sound Scriptural teaching.

As a contrast to this, read the following:

"The early reformers believed the pope to be the Antichrist. Now we know that the pope may have belonged to the anti-Christian system, but he was not the final Antichrist. . . . Communism of today fits this description of the final Antichrist better than does the pre-Reformation papacy.* But we are not safe in saying definitely that this prophecy is fulfilled in its entirety today. We cannot tell. We shall not know until the Son of Man himself descends from heaven with a shout.** The final Antichrist may arise from the line of prelates in Rome, a more iniquitous figure than any Reformation Age pope. It may be that he will arise out of Communism or out of Fascism. Had the end come in Luther's time, Christ would undoubtedly have considered the pope as sitting in the temple of God, as the Antichrist. Had Christ come during the 18th Century He would have found the Spirit of Antichrist in the likes of Voltaire and the Encyclopaedists. If Christ comes today Communism with its opposition to Christianity and to all religion except the worship of Lenin would be the Antichrist. But Christ may postpone His return and in later times a more literal fulfillment of the prophecy may be apparent." (*Journal of Theology*, Volume V., pp. 873-874.)

The writer of these lines is the Rev. C. Umhau Wolf, a member of the American Lutheran Church. This is a sample of the views which find public expression in the A.L.C. on the doctrine of the Antichrist. This is a sample of the views for which the A.L.C. asks tolerance in its declaration and which it has asked us to declare non-disruptive of Church-fellowship. The A.L.C. understands that the 1938 St. Louis Articles of Union grants this request. Among our own men there is no unanimity of opinion as to whether this request has been granted. Some say

that it has, and some say that it hasn't. If it is true that this has been granted, then it must be clear that our Confession on this point in the Brief Statement has been weakened. We shall be found guilty of saying that the doctrine is **not** an open question and of saying that **it is** an open question. Whether a union is effected with the A.L.C. on the basis which has been adopted or not, it is essential to our own unity that this matter be cleared up so there will be no doubt as to status of our present subscription to the Brief Statement. It is our sincere opinion that this can be done only by rescinding the St. Louis Union Articles of 1938. In that way we will lift the cloud of uncertainty and confusion which otherwise would work havoc with our own uniformity in doctrine, as well as with our unity of spirit.

C. M. G.

☉ "That They May Be One"

Writing with reference to John 17, 22, which was cited in the last issue of the **Confessional Lutheran**, (p. 50), a brother writes us—

"I would supplement what is said in order to clarify it. If you will read John 17, 6-19, you will find that Jesus requests certain things for His Apostles. In v. 20 He adds that He wants **all** believers to have those same things, in order that v. 21) they all (the Apostles and all other believers) may be one. In v. 22 Jesus then states that He has given all believers (including the Apostles) His glory for the same purpose (that they may all be one).

"Believers **are** then one just by having the same things (God's Word, v. 8; deliverance from the world, v. 10-19). There may be more things than I have just mentioned. But the idea is that all believers have these things, and are therefore one. The unity of believers is an accomplished fact; that is, the particular unity of which Jesus speaks in John 17."

Our correspondent has emphasized an important point. "That they may be one even as we are one" (John 17, 22) indeed refers to an accomplished fact rather than that we should speak of it as a motive in church work. The **Confessional Lutheran** is thankful for what it is glad to consider a correction, particularly since it concerns an often misunderstood and misused passage in union endeavors.

P. H. B.

**ACCEPTANCE OF THE ST. LOUIS
UNION ARTICLES OF 1938 MUST
BE RESCINDED**

* This is the height of absurdity. The Antichrist is to sit in the temple of God. Tess. 2, 4.—Editor.

** Note the skepticism and doubt, which is characteristic of the "scientific" theology of "American Lutheranism." Scripture says: "Now ye know," II Tess. 2, 6. American Lutherans, groping about in the dark because it has left the foundation and the blessed light of the Scriptures, says! "We cannot tell . . . We shall not know."—Editor.

1205
CL4
1/2, 7
Dr. L. Fuerbringer
801 De Mun Ave.
St. Louis, Mo.

Sec. 562, P. L. & P.



THE CONFESSIONAL LUTHERAN

Published In The Interest Of Ecumenical Lutheranism

MOTTO: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."--1 Cor. 1, 10.

REV. PAUL H. BURGDORF
Editor, Clinton, Iowa

REV. J. BUENGER
Assistant Editor

REV. C. M. GULLERUD
Contributing Editor

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Vol. II

July, 1941

No. 7

IN THIS ISSUE: The Fort Wayne Convention and the "Confessional Lutheran." — The Present Task of the "Confessional Lutheran." — The 1938 Resolutions of the Missouri Synod on Lutheran Union. — Strange Bed-Fel-

lows. — Radicalism and the "Cresset." — Where Unionism and Socialism Meet. — Walther's Theses on the Modern Theory of Open Questions. — The Dogmatic-Historical Background of the Present Union Movement.

● The Fort Wayne Convention and the "Confessional Lutheran"

When the Missouri Synod met at Ft. Wayne last month for its 1941 convention, most of the material contained in this issue of the **Confessional Lutheran** was already in the hands of its printers. It is for this reason that comparatively little notice is taken of that convention in this issue. However, in future issues, this journal will bring many pertinent articles that will take cognizance of that convention, and particularly of its union resolutions.

It was indeed a noteworthy convention of the Missouri Synod that was held in Ft. Wayne. Time and again we heard the remark that it was a sobered synod that met in June as compared with the St. Louis convention which all too hastily adopted the untenable union resolutions of 1938. Without a question this year's convention will go down as a most important convention in the history of the Missouri Synod.

That does not mean that all danger of a mistaken union with Lutherans who, as a church, do not stand foursquare upon the Word of God and upon that alone, is past. On the contrary, it is all-important to be more circumspect and careful than ever just now. And it is to the task of contributing to such circumspection that the **Confessional**

Lutheran is dedicated. From the beginning, this journal has been published in the interest of ecumenical Lutheranism. The preservation and extension of such Lutheranism is its prime object. In keeping with that fundamental object, it will be an important purpose of the **Confessional Lutheran** to discuss the Ft. Wayne resolutions in their relation to ecumenical Lutheranism. God willing, its readers may look forward to hearing a great deal on that score.

— P. H. B.

● The Present Task of the "Confessional Lutheran"

It is a fact which no one will deny that through the union resolutions of the St. Louis Convention of the Missouri Synod in 1938 the unity of spirit in the Synodical Conference was seriously disturbed. Not only did the Wisconsin Synod and the Norwegian Synod reject those resolutions, declaring them unacceptable as a basis for the proposed church-fellowship, but also within the Missouri Synod itself sentiment has been divided. Some have hailed the results of union endeavors thus far as the achievement of great and wonderful success. Others have denounced the basis in question as essentially unionistic. A great many have been unable to arrive at a definite

conviction in the matter. So serious has the dissension been that refusal to accept the position of those who have mistakenly claimed that negotiations with the American Lutheran Church have resulted in a sufficient doctrinal basis for union has time and again been openly branded as "separatism."

In the face of such facts it has been the object of the **Confessional Lutheran** clearly to set forth vital dangers which the Missouri Synod has incurred by accepting the untenable union basis of 1938; to point out mistakes which have been made in the course of negotiations with our opponents since 1920; to show that doctrinal differences which should have been **removed** were merely **covered up**;^{*} and to do all that is in its power to help restore the wonted unity of spirit of the Missouri Synod with the help of God.

The 1941 convention of the Missouri Synod differed noticeably from that of three years ago in that it more carefully considered obstacles and objections which obstruct fellowship with the American Lutheran Church and in that it gave fresh emphasis to certain fundamental principles and directions for future negotiations which, if conscientiously carried out, would render a false union practically impossible.

We realize that the recommendations of the committee on intersynodical matters (No. 3) at the 1941 convention, as well as the handling of the union question on the floor of Synod at Ft. Wayne generally, constitutes a reassuring step towards reestablishing the unity that had prevailed within the Missouri Synod. We are filled with continuous thanks to God for this gratifying result. But we cannot close our eyes to the fact that danger has by no means been wholly removed, and that Missourians are not yet of one mind with regard to all-important questions raised by the union movement. For, as to the question of carrying out directions for further negotiations, it is not to be forgotten that most excellent recommendations of a committee headed by the sainted Dr. F. Pieper, concerning future deliberations with other Lutherans, were adopted by the Missouri Synod convention at River Forest in 1929, when our Synod refused to accept the Chicago Theses. However, these resolutions have really not been carried out.

And as to the attitude of various groups within the Missouri Synod regarding the present status of union movement, matters stand

^{*} Documentary proof for this contention, as far as it has been produced, has never been refuted.

thus. Theoretically there is no disagreement among us as to the question under what conditions a true union can be consummated. We are all agreed that union without true unity in doctrine is not to be condoned but to be condemned. But did the Ft. Wayne convention remove differences of opinion in our midst as to the merits or demerits of result so far claimed? According to the Convention Series of the **Lutheran Witness** it did not even attempt such a solution. It is reported that Committee No. 3 let the whole matter rest with the remark: "We are not trying to set aside the doctrinal agreement reached at the convention in 1938." (Vol. LX, 12H, June 26, 1941, P. 1.)

Thus, so far as this phase of the union movement is concerned, nothing is settled. Those in favor of union are still convinced that the Chicago Theses represent a good Lutheran confession, in which all doctrinal differences on which they touch are already satisfactorily settled; while we, on the other hand, insist, and are in a position to prove, that in these theses differences are simply ignored in part, and partly covered up or hidden under ambiguous terms, leaving this document full of loopholes for old errors.

Even so, some are still convinced that the A. L. C. Declaration, which is in complete harmony with the Chicago Theses, is a quite satisfactory document, while others see in this document the same fatal flaws as in the Chicago Theses.

Is such a difference of opinion a negligible matter, which may be passed over without being settled? And should negotiations with the American Lutheran Church be continued regardless of such a discrepancy in our own midst? We know that the official periodicals of the Missouri Synod will not accept any articles in which mistakes that have been made, and that have caused the present confusion, are frankly discussed. We are convinced that as long as union negotiations are carried on without an acknowledgment and rectification of errors which have occurred, there will be danger for the Missouri Synod and for the Synodical Conference in further efforts towards union. It is more likely than not that the whole process will turn out as would an attempt at solving a complicated mathematical problem in which one unwittingly operates all the while with faulty basic factors that crept in unawares in the very beginning of things. Nor will mistakes, under such circumstances, be detected by a majority of our pastors, and much less by lay members, so long as they are not familiar with pertinent

doctrinal differences, and with the manner in which such differences have systematically been covered up during the last two decades.

For these reasons we consider it the task of the **Confessional Lutheran** to continue to disseminate information among its readers concerning doctrinal differences that obtain between the Missouri Synod (Synodical Conference) and the American Lutheran Church, to evaluate properly any new developments that may be reported from time to time, and to help pastors, teachers, and laymen form their own opinion and pass judgment on eventual results.

In fine, after the Ft. Wayne convention it will be, even more than before, if possible, the endeavor of the **Confessional Lutheran** to discuss controversial matters not only in an objective manner, but also in a friendly and brotherly tone, and never to lose sight of its main and ultimate aim: the reestablishment, under the blessing of God, of full and complete unity within the Missouri Synod.

— J. B.

⊕ The 1938 Resolutions of the Missouri Synod on Lutheran Union

The **Confessional Lutheran** has during the many moons of its existence concluded each issue of its publication with the slogan: "Acceptance of the St. Louis Union Articles of 1938 Must be Rescinded."

That slogan does not appear in this issue, and will not appear in future issues.

Why not?

We believe that, for all practical purposes, the St. Louis Resolutions have (statements to the contrary notwithstanding) virtually been superseded by the Ft. Wayne Resolutions of 1941. We believe, in particular, that mistaken liberal interpretations of the St. Louis resolutions, such as that which rested upon the unwarranted insinuation that the 1938 convention Committee on Intersynodical Matters (No. 16) used the term "nonfundamentals" with reference to the well-known Four Points (the false expectation of "a universal conversion of all Jews" etc., **General Proceedings**, 1938, p. 229) as "identical with the term 'open' questions," which must remain open questions (**Lutheran Witness**, Aug. 6, 1940, p. 275), and that differences in doctrine between the Missouri Synod and the American Lutheran Church have ceased—we believe that such contentions have been made difficult,

if not impossible, by the Ft. Wayne Resolutions. This was made clear beyond doubt on the convention floor, when one of the editors of the **Lutheran Witness** asked for clarification in this matter. The 1941 resolutions on Lutheran union embody among its instructions that the immediate objective of further negotiations with the American Lutheran Church is to be "**doctrinal unity**." The question was asked whether the Missouri Synod and the ALC had achieved doctrinal unity in 1938. To this question Dr. Fritz, chairman of the Committee on Intersynodical Matters replied unhesitatingly, emphatically, unequivocally, and correctly: "No!"

That doctrinal unity (or "sufficient doctrinal agreement") existed between the Missouri Synod and the American Lutheran Church by virtue of the St. Louis Resolutions (which the ALC never even adopted) was one of the fictions of 1938 that were held to in some quarters, and threatened to lead Missouri into a false union, but which have now fortunately had their day. It has now been made clear that negotiations are to be carried on upon a more sober basis than that. They are to be carried on upon a basis which earnestly regards the Scriptural injunction to be circumspect, because the days in which we live are evil days. (Eph. 5, 15f.) It has been made quite clear that the only sufficient doctrinal agreement which we know and will know is one that agrees to all of the teachings of the Bible and nothing but the Bible, fundamentals and "non-fundamentals" alike.

It is for this reason that we have dropped our slogan. We believe that it has served its purpose, and served it well, and that it can now be dispensed with, even though the issue which called it forth may not be entirely dead.

— P. H. B.

⊕ Strange Bed-Fellows.

Announcement comes to hand of the fifth annual "Luther Academy", to be held at Wartburg Seminary (American Lutheran Church) in Dubuque, Iowa, July 22-30. Dr. M. Reu of Dubuque will lecture on a dogmatic subject, and will also treat selected portions of the Epistle of the Galatians exegetically. The theology of Dr. Reu is largely and notoriously un-Biblical, which of course, means also un-Lutheran. We regard Dr. Reu as the outstanding unionist among Lutherans in America today.

Seven other men of the American Lutheran

Church are on the program of the "Luther Academy." In addition there will be one lecturer each from the United Lutheran Church and from one of the Scandinavian Lutheran Churches. And finally—it is also announced that Dr. O. P. Kretzmann, President of Valparaiso University will be on the program.

Strange bed-fellows, indeed!

It should be said that when it is announced, e. g. in the "Inter-Synod Lutheran News," that "the Missouri Synod will be represented by Rev. O. P. Kretzmann," this is not correct. Dr. Kretzmann will participate in the "Luther Academy" entirely on his own. He has not been asked or authorized by the Missouri Synod to serve as its representative.

— P. H. B.

●Radicalism and the "Cresset."

The July issue of the **Cresset** has just come to hand. It brings a review of Harold Rugg's recent book, **That Man May Understand**. Harold Rugg is a professor at the Columbia University Teachers' College. He has written a series of social science textbooks which exercise perhaps the greatest influence ever known in the annals of public schools. They are fundamentally subversive, subtly undermining, disparaging, or openly attacking the American way of life, and extolling Communist Russia, the collectivist system of which is offered as a remedy for American ills. To state the objectives of his textbooks in the words of Rugg himself: "The generations shortly to be given the responsibilities of self-government must be practiced in the attitude of the expectancy of change . . . change in economic and social government . . . and in objects of allegiance."

The use of Rugg textbooks in American schools has been severely criticized by such groups as the American Legion, the Daughters of the American Revolution, and others. As a result, they have been discarded by many schools throughout the nation. Also within the Missouri Synod a stand has been taken against them. Thus, Supt. Stellhorn has warned against them in the **News Bulletin**, monthly organ of the Board of Education of the Missouri Synod. The Missouri Synod had just such books in mind when, at its recent Ft. Wayne convention, it adopted a resolution on: "Objectionable Text-books and Other Forms of Instruction Inimical to the Faith of our Children." (**Lutheran Witness**) July 8,

1941, p. 242.) For, concerning religion, faith and morals, too, Rugg has his own ideas, and the **Cresset** also admits. Like every true radical, he believes that religion is a mere remnant of a bygone age, which is being happily overcome by a new order of things.

Professor Rugg has now attempted a defense of the views espoused in his series of textbooks. **That Men May Understand** is meant as a reply to his critics. It is this book that is reviewed by the **Cresset** in the July issue of this magazine. (Pp. 32-42.)

What is it that the **Cresset** has to say regarding Professor Rugg and his textbooks? Unbelievable as it may seem, the **Cresset** has the highest praise for the subversive tendencies of Mr. Rugg. To quote: "Harold Rugg, as one of the leaders in the progressive education movement in America, has had the misfortune of being unjustly attacked and pilloried as a Communist, as a fifth columnist, and as the American representative of the Kremlin. In this book he describes the persecution which has come to him and his colleagues as well. He also tells what he attempted to do in his now famous textbooks. To one who has followed the work of Paxson, Beard, Turner, and other American historians, Rugg's work is neither startling nor heretical. But there is a certain group in the United States which tolerates no questioning of the present economic or political structure. . . . **That Men May Understand** is a brilliant defense of progressive education and an unsparring J'Accuse of the professional patrioteers. It is a book which should be required reading for all Americans."

Were it not for the fact that the **Cresset** has been a persistent offender when it comes to the question of expressing itself with regard to radical tendencies, we would not be so ready to take up our pen in warning against its blind leadership in this direction. Because that happens to be the case, however, we cannot but speak against the danger to which it is exposing those who are numbered among its readers within our Church. There is no sense in proclaiming against weeds, and then permitting them to be cultivated right in our own garden.

The **Confessional Lutheran** shall in future issues have to say more regarding the unfortunate socialistic tendencies of the **Cresset**.

— P. H. B.

Where Unionism and Socialism Meet

It is by no means a mere accident that the Church is menaced by unionism and socialism at one and the same time in our day. For unionism and socialism indeed have much in common. In fact it is hardly too much to say that they are in essence one and the same. Unionism is the Church's socialism, and socialism is the world's unionism. It is only natural, therefore, that in actual practice they should, more often than not, go hand in hand.

It is neither merely a matter of accident that where unionism and socialism have entrenched themselves to any considerable degree in the Church, a spirit of Modernism (Rationalism) in the form of "Fundamentalism" or more extreme Liberalism, if not of actual philosophical naturalism or even practical atheism, should sooner or later put in its appearance. For these are the logical outcome of unionism and socialism.

It is in these simple, demonstrable truths that we can find the explanation of the fact that outstanding Modernists in such churches as, e. g. some of those affiliated with the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ, are not only leading advocates of unionism and socialism but also outright and ardent propagandists even of Marxist Communism, as it exists in godless Russia today.

It is for this reason also that the **Confessional Lutheran**, which is published in the interest of ecumenical Lutheranism, is at one and the same time dedicated to the defense of the truth over against unionism and socialism, in which two phenomena it recognizes a common foe of the Church.

The truth of the point that we are trying to make was clearly realized already a hundred years ago by that great man whom God gave to our Lutheran Church in America, Dr. C. F. W. Walther. In marked contrast to some present-day Lutheran leaders, Walther enjoyed such a measure of critical acumen, historical insight, and maturity of judgment—or should we just say Christian enlightenment—that he could declare, even in his day: "The world has really become unionistic, and as a result, atheistic. Aside from open unbelief, unionism is now the fundamental ill among professed Christians." (*Lehre und Wehre*, XIV, p.1.)

Indeed, Walther was not the first great churchman to sense in its beginnings the advent of what has come about in our day,

namely,—this, that the world has in an astoundingly short space of time become thoroughly unionistic and socialistic, and, as a result, atheistic. Striking as it may seem, the Lutheran theologian J. Conr. Dannhauer wrote a few years before his death, which occurred in 1666: "**Perhaps the world will soon be astounded to have become so suddenly syncretistic,* and as a consequence, atheistic.**" (This, almost three hundred years ago!) Walther remarks regarding this most remarkable utterance of nigh three centuries past: "That this great divine did not voice an empty supposition, but that he, enlightened by God's Word and instructed by a deep insight into the history of the Church of all times, correctly interpreted the signs of the times, this no one can deny." And, with an acumen akin to that of Dannhauer, Walther adds: "What Dannhauer predicted beforehand these two hundred years ago, that we now see literally fulfilled before our eyes." (*Loc. cit.*)

Unionism and socialism have this in common at bottom that they in some degree or another reject the authority of God (as it is revealed in His inspired Word, so far as the Church is concerned; as it is revealed by nature and in the conscience of man, in the case of the State) or relegate it more or less to the background of things, and substitute for it the authority of man, and more especially of some social group, ecclesiastical or secular; local, national, or international, as the case may be. The voice of whatever group they have chosen to follow is everything to unionists and socialists. That voice will, more often than not, be found, upon closer inspection, to be the voice of a single man, or of a small group of men at best. But the multitude blindly follows the ideas—the ideology—of such an individual or of such a group of individuals. It is for this reason that there

*"Syncretism" for all practical purposes means simply unionism. This interesting word, from the Greek *synkretizein*, is commonly understood as referring to the one-time inhabitants of Crete, concerning whom the Scriptures have certified: "One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies." (Tit. 1, 12.) So derived, it would mean, literally, to join others in speaking or shouting forth the most perverse things, like Cretians.

Walter calls attention to the fact that Dannhauer's striking words are evidently a play on the rather similar words of Jerome, with reference to an earlier age of the Church: "The whole world breathed a sigh of wonderment over having become Arianistic." (*Loc. cit.*) Broadly speaking three ages of marked defection can be distinguished in the New Testament Church,—1) Arianism, representing the first great rise of fatal error within the Church, with its denial of the eternal deity of Christ, which was dealt with in the Nicene Council and its creeds in the year 325; 2) Roman Catholicism, the culminating mystery of iniquity and specific Papistical Antichristian character of which were revealed in the Reformation at the close of the Middle Ages; 3) the complete "Modernism" of the last times, which has come to a head in our own day.

is such an emphasis on persons, mere persons considered by themselves (the **Fuehrer-prinzip**), wherever unionism or socialism prevail. Such persons are regarded as men of authority in a very particular sense of the word. Their assertions, however wild they may be, backed up by their signature, or it may be their picture, is enough for the multitude that follows them.

So far as the Church is concerned, the rejection of divine authority begins with a vicious theory of "open questions" (whether specifically so called or not), in accordance with which varying "interpretations" of clear passages of Scripture are allowed and categorically declared "non-divisive" of church-fellowship, thus making it possible for error to exist side by side with the truth, to thrive, and finally to supplant it. In its ultimate reaches such a theory must of necessity be totally destructive of Biblical truth. That is why Walther, in his conflict with American Lutheranism (the Iowa Synod) with reference to this theory, declared: "The modern theory, that there are open questions among the clearly revealed doctrines of God's Word is the most dangerous **unionistic** principle of our time, which necessarily leads to skepticism, and eventually to naturalism." (*Lehre und Wehre*, XIV, p. 319.)

As an example of what is being produced in the name of Christianity by unionistic and socialistic tendencies today, witness the following, from the **Protestant Digest** of Jan., 1940: "The world is God's body. It belongs to God who gives it freely to be broken for men. The Lord's supper . . . symbolizes this gift. To partake of this gift is perhaps the highest religious act. To plow the earth and plant there seed and to harvest and break the wheat for bread, these are the age-old ritual of religion." (P. 5.)

As to the manner of their operation, unionism and socialism are identical in that they are necessarily totalitarian. They are themselves, in their totality, everything. Nothing else counts for anything. Nothing dare stand in their way. Like the voice of a god, they subject everything under their control. So far as the Church is concerned, a beginning toward such totalitarianism has been made whenever a church is ready to decree that by virtue of its own authority some false teaching is to be accorded an equal place beside the Word of God by its being categorically declared "non-divisive" of fellowship, or, in other words by declaring questions which have once and for all been closed by

Scripture to be open questions after all: or, when it decrees that its decisions and regulations in matters that ought to be left open are binding upon those who are under the sway of its "authority."

As for the final aim and hope of unionism and socialism, they have this in common that they dream of a utopian golden age of one sort or another, ecclesiastical or secular, as the case may be, that is to come upon earth. That is why Walther said of socialistic communism: "Communism is nothing else than what chiliasm is in the Church. Communism is the world's chiliasm." (*Communism and Socialism*, 1886, p. 17.)

All that belongs to a fuller discussion under this head is intimately related to, and can indeed be said to be comprised in, what is expressed by the term "Social Gospel." This "gospel," in distinction from **the Gospel**, in its true character and aims, brushing aside such important distinctions as, for instance, a proper distinction of the Church and the State, actually envisions, expects, and promises the establishment of a kingdom of God, as an external, visible organization, a celestial civilization, here on earth.) Cp. e.g., **Pop. Comment.**, N. T., II, p. 226f.) Contrary to Scripture, it entertains the evolutionary hope of actually seeing this world become a better place to live in. Its advocates do not believe the solemn assurance of Scripture, according to which "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived" (II Tim. 3, 13), and according to which such perilous times shall come, in the last days, as are described, e. g., in II Tim. 3, 1ff and elsewhere. They do not believe that the most the Church can do in such a world is to preach the Gospel as a witness against the nations and save itself from such an untoward generation. They believe that by their ingenuity they can achieve what God has warned his children never to look for on earth, lest, sorely deluded by reality, their misguided faith give way to wavering and doubt. So far as the Church is concerned—and it is important to the advocates of this modern theory to conceive of the Church as a visible, social entity, and, accordingly to contend for their view of a "visible side" of the (invisible) Church over against those who hold the true Scriptural view of Christ's kingdom—so far as the Church is concerned, the advocates of this false theory hope to achieve their aims, among other things, through external bigness, brought about by ecclesiastical coalition that ignores every Scriptural endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit. This unity

is expressed and recognized so far as it can be recognized, by a common acceptance and expression of one and the same faith in one and the same eternal, divine truth, and is the only thing in this world that can make for a maximum of peace and love among men. "Lend no ear to prophets of doom"—that is the constant and unvarying theme of advocates of this theory; "better days are coming." Halcyon days are promised. And the hastening of their realization is made dependent on, and assured with, acceptance of the theory of such misguided enthusiasts.

As an illustration of an expression of all or most of the elements of the evil on which we have been dwelling, we offer the most pertinent excerpts of a prayer by James Hilton, author of the "Lost Horizon," which was reprinted in the February, 1941, issue of the **Iowa Parent-Teacher**, official publication of the Iowa Congress of Parents and Teachers, to wit:—

"Let us pray to God, The Unconquerable Spirit in Man: . . .

"Befriend the victims of injustice and equate the rewards of labor nearer to the needs of man; and accustom us to work, not for the snatched profit, but for the common good and for the planned destiny of mankind.

"Give patience to those who wait restlessly for this, and hope to those who have ceased to believe that it will come; and fill our hearts with faith in a Kingdom of Heaven which our children's children may some day find on earth. Amen."

Answering the question as to how far such perverse views have made inroads in the Lutheran Church of America, we might refer to the pastor of a large church within the American Lutheran Conference. As he holds forth, time and again, on his pet theme of chiliastic expectations, he can be heard dangling a vision-to-be-desired before his Sunday congregation and radio audience, and then declaring: "Socialism and Communism will not achieve it. But when Christ comes we shall have equal distribution and every man will sit under his own figtree."

Is there any inclination to entertain any such views, to tolerate them, among us? In answer we reply: look about and see. Look particularly at the ill-considered union resolutions adopted at the 1938 convention of the Missouri Synod. Look at what has been written in an attempted defense of those untenable resolutions in official and unofficial Missourian publications.

We say, look about and see! For God asks **you** to decide the question which has been asked. You cannot and dare not simply leave such matters blindly to officials, committees, and conventions. For, these have often erred. And anyone who asks you to do so is the very one you should distrust first and most.

Beyond the simple suggestion we have made, we wish to state that Walther's essay on the subject of syncretism and a syncretistic theory of open questions with reference to American Lutheranism, as it is contained in **Lehre und Wehre**, Vol. XIV, pp. 1-4; 33-39; 66-70, should be read in its entirety by everyone who is earnestly interested in coming to a clear understanding of one of the basic issues that is involved in a vital controversy that has engaged the Missouri Synod throughout most of its existence and which has flared up anew today. Walther's essay should be on the "Must" list in the present controverted union movement among Lutherans in America.

P. H. B.

❶ Walter's Theses on the Modern Theory of Open Questions

(Continued)

Resuming our discussion of Walther's Theses on the Modern Theory of Open Questions, we again want to call attention to what has been pointed out in the beginning of this discussion,—namely, that, following the introductory thesis, Theses II-VI were meant to answer certain objections and to clear away a number of important misunderstandings. It was noted that more careful study is required for the discussion of these theses than for the remaining ones. Our discussion of these five theses, which, following the introductory thesis constitute the first main portion of Walther's propositions, was concluded in the February issue of this Journal.

It has also been pointed out that in the second portion of his propositions, that is, in Theses VII-XIV, Walther directly attacked the false modern theory of open questions (Modernism), as it has always been represented in America by the Iowa Synod, and as it is still championed by the American Lutheran Church today.* In his final thesis, XV, Walther summarizes his conclusions and warns against the extreme danger of the false modern theory of open questions, showing what it eventually leads to.

* Cf. also *Lutheran Witness*, LIX, 16 (Aug. 6, 1940), p. 275f.

It will be readily seen that these remaining theses are so simple and clear that they really require but little discussion. We again wish to remind our readers, however, that ample material bearing on them, written by Walther himself, is to be found in the latter's classic essay on "The False Props of the Modern Theory of Open Questions," in **Lehre und Wehre**, Vol. XIV, and in the translation of that essay as it appeared in the **Concordia Theological Monthly**, beginning with the issue of April, 1939. It is again to be noted, however, that in the latter translation this essay has been emasculated in some of its most vital portions, and that the translation itself is not always wholly reliable.

With these observations in mind, we shall do little more than present a translation of Walther's remaining theses here, particularly so since we have, in view of the present situation, preferred to discuss many of the things that are pertinent to them in connection with the theses which have already been discussed.

We feel that it is necessary to add one earnest word of warning. It is this: Let no one who has read Walther's simple, clear theses on this all-important subject, and who himself champions conflicting views, as is the case with one and another Lutheran theologian today, dare claim that Walther's position is identical with his own. And let no one blindly follow those who make such false, mistaken claims in the present controverted union movement. For to do so would involve permitting the making of a false witness of Walther and besmirching his great name (Mt. 5, 19). It will, moreover, lead to endless confusion in the Church. And that, no matter how good and sincere one's intentions may be. Over against such a situation everyone of us is in Christian duty bound to rise up in protest.

Walther's Theses, VII-XIV, now follow:—

Thesis VII

"No man has the liberty, and no man dare be accorded the liberty, to believe or to teach differently from what God has revealed in His Holy Word, whether this pertain to primary or secondary fundamental articles of faith, fundamental or non-fundamental doctrines, matters of faith or of life, historical or other matters that are the subject of natural investigation, matters that are important or apparently unimportant."

Thesis VIII

"The Church is to instigate proceedings against every departure from the doctrine of

God's Word, whether it be a departure on the part of teachers or so-called laymen, of individuals or of whole particular churches."

Thesis IX

"Such as stubbornly deviate from God's Word, no matter what part of God's Word may be concerned, are to be excluded by the Church."

Contrary to this thesis and the two preceding it, the **Lutheran Witness** has actually said, with reference to the well-known "Four Points"—including, e. g., the false doctrine of the conversion of the Jews, which involves the rejection of clear passages of Scripture—that the term "non-fundamentals" has been used with reference to them in the Missouri Synod's Union Resolutions of 1938 "as identical with the term 'open questions'," which "must remain open questions". **"These non-fundamentals,"** it is there said, "are indeed of a nature that no one can treat a difference regarding them as divisive without becoming what Walther in his thesis calls schismatic or separatistic." (**Luth. Witness**) Aug. 6, 1940, p. 275.)

This far-reaching error of the **Lutheran Witness** is due to a misconception of Walther's position and is based upon a complete misunderstanding of the thesis of Walther to which reference is made. This plainly appears from the **Lutheran Witness's** mistranslation of that Thesis. The situation is this. In his important book concerning **The True Visible Church**, Walther makes a distinction between sects and schismatic bodies, on the basis of I Cor. 11, 18f: "I hear that there be schisms among you; and I partly believe it. For there must be even sects among you, etc." In Thesis V of the volume named (pp. 24-35) Walther defines sects as such bodies as stubbornly err with regard to fundamental doctrines of God's Word. In Thesis VI he defines as schismatic or separatistic communions such as destroy the unity of the Church through errors which do not subvert the foundation of faith, or because of persons, ceremonies, or life. (Pp. 33-39. Cp. also p. 118.) The **Lutheran Witness** mistranslates the latter thesis of Walther when it says that Walther "defines as 'schismatic communions' (churches keeping up an unjustified division) those which destroy the unity of the Church on account of 'non-fundamental errors etc.'." (**Loc. cit.** Our emphasis.) This completely reverses the statement of Walther, putting the blame for disunity in the Church not on those who cause it through their schismaticism or separatism (where Walther put it), but

upon those who refuse to fellowship such schismatics or separatists, through whom the unity of the Church is actually destroyed.

As for Walther's position on external fellowship by the way, which the **Lutheran Witness** injects into the above situation, this subject is, in the volume named, not discussed in the thesis that has been referred to at all. It is rather presented in Theses XXI-XXV of the same volume, where Walther, having set forth with much clearness and at length the Confessional position of the Lutheran Church with regard to the Scriptures, says in unmistakable language that the Lutheran Church is the true visible Church of God upon earth because, among other things, it "denounces all fraternal and ecclesiastical fellowship with those who reject its Confession, whether in whole or in part." (P. 146. **Walther and the Church**, p. 127.)

Thesis X

"The fact that the Church Militant attains no higher degree of unity than a fundamental one ** does not prove that any error contrary to the Word of God can have equal **privilege** with the truth or is to be tolerated in the Church."

Thesis XI

"(To assume) that **Christian dogmas develop only gradually** and that doctrines which have not yet undergone this process of development are open questions, militates against the doctrine that the Church of all times is but one and that the Scriptures are the sole and complete source of knowledge of Christian religion and theology."

This thesis is directed against the third false prop of the modern theory of open questions as represented by the Iowa Synod, which has been discussed previously, namely, —against a false "historical" conception according to which doctrines are developed by the Church as time goes along, particularly during periods of controversy, and only departures from dogmas so established are to be considered divisive of fellowship. Against this false modern theory Walther rightly and convincingly argues: the Church of all times is one. It consists of all believers. What is to be believed at all times is always one and the same. Walther also shows what this terrible teaching leads to. It would make of the Church a mere philosophical school, whose

task it is eternally to seek the truth, whereas the Church is according to God's Word Christ's beloved bride, to whom truth has actually been entrusted as her most treasured dowry, to be kept by her, II Tim. 1, 13f; I Tim. 6, 20.

Walther discussed this subject at length in **Lehre und Wehre**, XIV, pp. 129-141; 161-169. (**C. T. M.**, 1939, pp. 415-420; 507-513; 587-595.)

Thesis XII

"(To assume) that those doctrines which are **not symbolically** fixed are to be reckoned among open questions militates against the historical origin of the symbols as well as against the fact that the same do not intend to present a complete system of doctrine and that they at the same time profess adherence to the entire content of Scripture as the object of the faith of the Church."

This thesis, likewise directed against the Iowa Synod, is closely related to the foregoing one. Material bearing on it will be found in Walther's discussion of the False Props of the Modern Theory of Open Questions in **Lehre und Wehre**, XIV, pp. 201-211. (**C. T. M.**, 1939, pp. 656-666.)

Thesis XIII

"Also this (assumption) that those doctrines with regard to which even **teachers who are acknowledged as orthodox** have erred are to be recognized as open questions militates against the canonical authority and dignity of the Scriptures."

This thesis is directed against the fourth false prop of the modern theory of open questions. Material bearing on it is to be found in Walther's discussion of it in **Lehre und Wehre**, XIV, pp. 233-240. (**C. T. M.**, 1939, pp. 752-759.)

Thesis XIV

"(The contention) that there are Christian doctrines of faith contained in the Scriptures which are **not clearly, plainly, and unmistakably** contained therein and that these are for this very reason to be reckoned among open questions militates against the clarity and thus against the purpose or the divine character of the Holy Scriptures, which purpose to be a revelation of God."

In the classic essay of Walther to which reference has now been made time and again the contention with which Walther takes is-

Cp. Thesis V, **Confessional Lutheran, I, 7 (July, 1919), p. 64f.

sue in this thesis constitutes the fifth false prop of the modern theory of open questions. In his refutation of the false arguments in support of this prop, Walther says, with reference to the Iowa Synod: "That also the prop with which the Iowa Synod accordingly seeks to maintain the theory of open questions which is cherished also by her is a false one, which subverts the foundation of Christian faith,—this is, alas, too clear. For she does nothing less than to overthrow the fundamental doctrine of the **clarity of the Scriptures.**" He likewise states that in the Milwaukee Colloquy of the previous year, the irreconcilable difference in the basic view of the Missouri Synod and the Iowa Synod manifested itself in the discussion of this subject, also according to the admission of the Iowa **Kirchenblatt** itself, official organ of that Synod, in its report of that colloquy. Cp. **Lehre u. Wehre**, XIV (1868), pp. 297-305. **C. T. M.**, Nov., 1939, pp. 827-834.

In its translation of Walther's essay, the **Concordia Theological Monthly**, Nov., 1939, p. 827) omitted fully a page and a half of Walther's essay, which constitutes precisely the most pertinent part of his discussion relative to the Iowa Synod with reference to this question, (**Lehre und Wehre**, XIV, p. 297.) Anyone who is at all familiar with the facts as Walther presents them will have read with amazement the altogether unreliable discussion of Open Questions as it is presented under the head "Some Forgotten History" in the **Lutheran Witness** of June 25, 1940, where it is mistakenly stated that in 1867 the Iowa Synod had come to an agreement with the Missouri Synod with reference to a correct definition of the term "open questions," and that so far as open questions are concerned the 1938 resolutions of the Missouri Synod accordingly merely stated what has been on record for seventy years. (Cp. also the similar ridiculous statement, "The Iowa Synod dropped this doctrine"—its open question doctrine—"in 1867," in a letter of one of the editors of the **Lutheran Witness** to the editor of the **Confessional Lutheran** published "In the Interest of Fairness and Truth," in the July, 1940 issue of this journal, p. 48.)

It is still to be added with reference to the Milwaukee Colloquy of 1867 that in view of Iowa's insistence on speaking of teachings concerning which there need be no absolute agreement, because they are either not at all or not clearly contained in God's Word, Walther stated that on Missouri's side this addition, "which are **not altogether clearly and unmistakably** contained in God's Word"

was acceptable only "when taken to be identical with **not at all** contained" therein. (**L. u. W.**, XIV, p. 298.) As an illustration of what Walther and his colleagues had in mind we might, e. g., suggest the question: what was the exact length of Christ's ministry? This is one of many examples that might be cited to make clear to any theologian, and earnest student of the Scriptures, what is at issue here, and what is not.

Walther's concluding thesis, XV, is of such importance that we shall discuss it separately.

For the time being we shall conclude our discussion by repeating what we have had to emphasize over and over again, viz.: **A proper consideration of Walther's Theses (L. u. W., XIV, p. 318f; C. T. M., XI, 4. p. 298ff) leaves no room for the false modern theory of open, categorically non-divisive questions in the field of Scriptural, Christian doctrine. On the contrary, it demands denunciation of it.**

(To be Concluded)

P. H. B.

● The Dogmatic-Historical Background of the Present Union Movement

5. Objective and Subjective Justification

(Continued)

As examples of the manner in which the doctrine of objective justification was in former years attacked by men of the Iowa and Ohio Synods a number of quotations will be offered:

Dr. Geo. Fritschel, then pastor in Fond du Lac, Wis., wrote in 1906: "In the course of the controversy on predestination the **method** was seen according to which Missouri operates when she wishes to give currency to a new invention ("Fuendlein"). First the business goes on quietly, only few being initiated. As that sower was out when the people slept and quietly sowed his 'seed', so the 'seed' is quietly sown. Then quite stealthily feelers are sent forth again and again. When a watchman somewhere stands guard and raises his alarm, there is a careful retreat back under cover while the 'seed' continues to be spread. In the course of time when one is quite certain of the men in one's own camp one comes out into the open, first in **Lehre und Wehre**, then in the **Lutheraner**. That was Missouri's method in the past, and thus it is still today. We now see how for a long time; secretly and under cover, a new doctrine of justification has been prepared and is now

brought out into the open. It may be that Missouri's doctrine of predestination is only the necessary consequence of this doctrine of justification. Indeed, Dr. Pieper's repeated declaration that the predestination controversy between Ohio and Missouri was bound to come because of lack of unity in the doctrine of justification is becoming plausible. In the doctrines of election and justification Ohio is contending for the historical Lutheran position over against Missouri. Tracing backward the genesis of the justification doctrine of Missouri, the first traces, if I mistake not, are found in the Synodical Report of 1860 where we find a number of statements that are awry (found also, though quite concealed, in the 1859 Report of the Western District). Pastor Brohm was the essayist. The docile pupils of Walther in the Norwegian Synod had this essay presented also to them and they took the field for the doctrine of the 'universal justification' of unbelievers prior to faith. The Swedes fought them in a long, bitter battle (1862-72), aided at the time by Prof. Gottfr. Fritschel." (By the way, how does this development, as here reported, harmonize with the "method" previously ascribed to Missouri?)

"The Synodical Conference (in 1872), itself not entirely clear on the question (cf. Loy, **Story of my Life**, pg. 356), sought to extricate itself from its predicament by publishing in lieu of an answer to G. Fritschel the very essay with its unclear statement, to serve as a witness against him. A new sally was made in 1883 in the Report of the Southern District which evidently wasn't read by Missouri's opponents. Again in 1888, this time in **Lehre und Wehre**, the new doctrine was presented to the public in the form of an attack upon Philippi's presentation of the Lutheran doctrine of justification. The attack was premature, the method a failure, and so it was deemed expedient to drop the matter. At that time, besides Allwardt, Prof. Gottfr. Fritschel, as a dying man summoning his last strength took the pen in opposition and proved Missouri's departure from pure doctrine.

"He says that at least we (Iowans) bear testimony against this assault upon the Lutheran doctrine of justification. 'An unconditioned election of grace, an unconditioned justification! An election of grace with no room for faith, a justification without faith! God in grace preserve Lutheran Christians from a fall from the **articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae**' (thus far Gottfr. Fr.).

"By this time, it seems, the 'seeds' have

sprouted and according to old tactics we find the proponents of this new teaching of a justification **prior** to faith and **apart from** faith coming forth boldly into the open. They feel certain of victory and presently, no doubt, as in the thirteen Ft. Wayne Theses, a new justification **prior** to faith and **apart from** faith will be formally decreed." (**Sprechsaal**, Bd. II, pg. 103-105.).

In the **Theologische Zeitblaetter** of the Ohio Synod the following sentences are found on the subject of justification: "It must not be an indifferent matter to us if the Missouri Synod for example teaches that there is no difference between natural and wilful resistance and that, therefore, all men resist alike until converted by the Holy Ghost whether they believe or disbelieve . . . etc.

"Furthermore it does not agree with the Gospel when the personal justification by faith is denied while one teaches that all men, whether they believe or not, have in Christ already been personally justified. The Gospel does not teach us this way; for according to the Gospel all men are by nature dead in trespasses and sins, without God and without hope in the world. They are children of wrath and children of the devil, and only then when through repentance and faith they have passed from death to life are they personally justified." (A. A. Dapper, **Theol. Zeitblaetter**, 1914 pg. 112-115.)

It is apparent that the writer of these sentences has not understood the difference between objective and subjective justification. We can speak of "personal" justification or of God's accepting sinners as His children, only when we treat of subjective justification by faith.

In the January and April issues of the **Theologische Quartalschrift** of 1940, Prof. Meyer gives an exegetical treatment of objective justification **vis-a-vis** of Dr. Lenski's interpretation of Paul's Letter to the Romans. In his excellent study the writer quotes from an earlier number of the **Quartalschrift** a number of passages written during the controversy between Pastor Zorn and two writers of the Ohio Synod. Pastor Zorn had disavowed the false conception that faith in justification is a condition which man must fulfill, upon the fulfilment of which condition his sins are forgiven. No, the forgiveness is offered to man as a blessing which is already prepared for him and needs only to be accepted by faith. Pastor Zorn then continued:

"Yes, through the Word of faith, the Gospel, the forgiveness and justification which

has been procured by Christ for all men is revealed and offered to us freely and unconditionally. It is not true that God through the Gospel announces the redemption wrought by Christ and at the same time states the condition that must be fulfilled so that He may now actually forgive our sins and justify us, namely the condition that we **first must believe**. Before faith can at all be spoken of, God has already justified us along with the whole world and has revealed and offered us this justification in the Gospel. And yet we must **believe** in order to possess and enjoy the forgiveness of our sins and justification. . .

"Who, then, possesses this justification? He who does not want to achieve it by his own works but puts his faith and trust in God. To such a man God says: 'You cannot be made just in My sight by your works? But you believe and trust My Word that by grace for Christ's sake I justify the ungodly? Very well, I give my Amen to that. You, too, are just in My sight. Your faith, the object of your faith, I account to you unto righteousness.' Thus it is that through faith we come to possess the forgiveness of sins and justification". — "The forgiveness of sin and justification which has long been in readiness for us and is revealed and offered in the Gospel—this we must accept, put our trust in it, rely upon it, **believe** it. . . . If we do not accept it, if we mistrust the Divine Scriptures, if we reject as invalid the title deed which conveys forgiveness to us—well, we then do not come into possession and enjoyment of forgiveness. . . He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned, because he rejects the forgiveness of sins offered in the Gospel. Mk. 16, 15, 16. Thus, to be sure, we must believe if we are to possess and enjoy forgiveness and justification."

This presentation of Dr. Zorn provoked an attack on the part of Pastor Lenski, then editor of the Ohio **Kirchenzeitung**, later Professor of Theology. He summed up his objections in three points:

"1. (In the Missourian presentation) reconciliation and personal justification are thrown together so that there is no more room for a personal justification by faith. . . . Thus the chief and fundamental doctrine of Scripture and of the Lutheran Church is destroyed."

(Note: Not the personal justification of the individual by faith, but the **universal** justification of mankind already lies in Christ's reconciliation.)

"2. According to this new teaching the sins of "everyone," of all men, irrespective of their faith or unbelief were forgiven when Christ accomplished His work of reconciliation. . . . Thus Missouri destroys the Scriptural doctrine of justification by faith.

"3. No longer is it to be true that God justifies in the moment when a poor sinner comes to faith in Christ."

This last sentence is a downright distortion of what Pastor Zorn had said about subjective justification.

Following Lenski, Pastor Klindworth also attacked the article of Dr. Zorn. He wrote, "**Here a justification without faith** is taught. Scripture knows only of a justification by faith. Scripture teaches: first a man must believe, then he is justified, then he receives the forgiveness of sins. Just so Luther also taught. But here we find a new teaching that neither harmonizes with Scripture nor with the Confessions of the Church. . . . **justified before we believe!** Isn't that a justification without faith?"

Both Pastor Lenski and Pastor Klindworth assailed Dr. Zorn's presentation because they supposed that in this presentation due justice was not accorded to the dignity of faith. Faith, they supposed, must be more than the mere acceptance of a gift already prepared. This very point which, as Prof. Meyer correctly emphasizes, constitutes the true heart of the doctrine of justification these men of Ohio branded as a monstrosity. Pastor Lenski wrote: "Centuries ago a justification of the whole world, now believe it!" "Man is now merely to believe the justification which has been ready so long ago." "Faith comes limping behind (**der Glaube hinkt hinterdrein**)."

Pastor Zorn answered these attacks by pointing anew to the true nature of subjective justification: "And so by this mere acceptance, by the faith which follows and 'comes limping behind' the gracious verdict which God has spoken long ago, the believer is now just before God. God says to him: '**You are just in my sight.**' To the poor sinner his faith is accounted unto righteousness. What grace! What comfort! We are sinners but God declares the sinner, the godless as just. We hear this. We believe it. And God says: 'You are now just in my sight'. Because you accept and believe my verdict you can stand in my presence (Rom. 4, 5)." **Quartalschrift**, Apr. 1940 pg. 119ff.)

(To be continued)

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Dr. D. Fuerbringer
801 De Ann Ave.
St. Louis, Mo.

THE CONFESSIONAL LUTHERAN

Published In The Interest Of Ecumenical Lutheranism

MOTTO: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."--I Cor. 1, 10.

REV. PAUL H. BURGDOFF
Editor, Clinton, Iowa

REV. J. BUENGER
Assistant Editor

REV. C. M. GULLERUD
Contributing Editor

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IN THIS ISSUE:—Polemics — Ominous Silence — The Position of the American Lutheran Church with regard to the Holy Scriptures — A burning Question — One of the Simple Questions at Issue — Does the A. L.

C. "Declaration" Exclude Millennialism? — Objective and Subjective Justification (Concl) — Unionism — Looking for a Visible Side of the Invisible Church.

● Polemics

Polemics is "the art or practice of supporting or disputing an opinion or argument, especially in religious matters." (Winston's Loose-Leaf Dictionary.) The **Concordia Cyclopaedia** says, p. 590f, that polemics is the controversial side of theology.

"Satan, the world, and the flesh are constantly bent on falsifying the Word of God or the pure doctrine. Had no one ever contended against error from the days of Athanasius to our own, the knowledge of salvation would long ago have disappeared from the face of the earth, and thus the salvation of innumerable souls would be undone." Thus, the **Concordia Cyclopaedia** on the reason for polemics. In support of this proposition Dr. Walther is quoted: "He who performs what God commands cannot but be blessed in time and eternity. Yea, even though we should, on account of our struggle for the pure doctrine of our Church, stand disgraced before men to the Last Day, if we but persevere, remaining firm and steadfast in the fight, the Last Day shall be our coronation day, as surely as God is just and true. . ." We must assert the truth and combat error daily and everywhere.

In the earlier years of the Reformation,

the great Erasmus was tempted to try his hand and head against Luther. In the preface to his argument he told Luther that he did not delight in assertions. In answer to this, Luther, as in courtesy bound, estimated Erasmus to be of a benevolent mind and a lover of peace. But Luther then also says: "Not, to delight in assertions is not the character of the Christian mind; nay, the Christian must delight in assertions, or he is not a Christian. But (that we may not be mistaken in terms) **by assertion** I mean a constant adhering, confirming, confessing, defending, and invincibly persevering." (Cole-Atherton, **The Bondage of the Will**, p. 18f.) St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, I-14.8: "If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to battle?" Timothy was told: "Preach the Word, be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." II Tim. 4, 2.

Such truths as the above must be disagreeable to church "diplomats" who seek peace at most any price, and who seek union without unity in all points of Christian doctrine. But these truths were the guide-posts for the 1929 Delegate Convention of the Missouri Synod at River Forest in its resolutions on inter-synodical matters. (Cp. **Proceedings**, p. 112f.) These resolutions deserve to be quoted in full. Of particular interest we find

the part which treats of public discussion of doctrinal differences, to wit:

"5) We finally recommend that Synod instruct the editorial staff of the various periodicals of our organization, that the Scriptural doctrines concerned, together with old and new differences in doctrine, be treated in more extensive articles during the next year. The various district synods and conferences are likewise to be urged to choose topics treating the Scriptural doctrines in question during the next years."

This was the last point of the convention committee report of that year, 1929. The report was adopted in full. It meant that, for example, the **Lutheran Witness** should bring extensive polemical articles on the differences in doctrine between groups which now make up the American Lutheran Church, and the Norwegian Lutheran Church (the American Lutheran Conference) on the one hand, and the Synodical Conference on the other hand.* It meant that at district synods, that is, the conventions at which our lay-delegates are present, polemics should be carried on against the false opinions and arguments of other Lutherans. In short, It meant a public discussion of doctrinal differences which were current at the time, 1929.

Politicians often object to trying a case in the newspapers. But in the Church we must discuss doctrinal differences in such ways and in such places as to inform our lay membership and to enable them to take part in doctrinal discussions. The Church's laity as well as its pastors must judge all things on the basis of Holy Writ. We must not forget that half the votes at our conventions are those of laymen. And the pastor of a local congregation is greatly aided in his work if he can point to simple and reliable discussions of doctrinal differences in our church periodicals,—discussions which show why we are necessarily separate from some other Lutherans.

Shall we continue to be as wise as we were in 1929? There are old and new differences in doctrine now between the American Lutheran Church and the Missouri Synod. Polemics must be continued.

G. Schweikert.

*We are heartily in accord with the sentiment expressed by Dr. Frotenhauer when he reminded the editorial staff of the **Lutheran Witness** that it has a great responsibility in the present union movement.—Ed.

● Ominous Silence

At the Ft. Wayne Convention of the Missouri Synod in June Dr. Theo. Engelder, member of the Missouri Synod's Committee on Lutheran Union, made it plain beyond possibility of doubt that doctrinal unity unfortunately does not exist between the Missouri Synod and the American Lutheran Church. He showed at length, and most convincingly, that this holds true as regards the doctrine of Scripture, Justification, Election, and still other matters. Referring to the statements by the American Lutheran Church and its leaders at its conventions at Sandusky in 1938, at Detroit in 1940, and at the American Lutheran Conference Convention at Minneapolis in 1940, he stated that official declarations of the American Lutheran Church fill us with alarm and disappointment. Comparing the situation that confronts us today with the situation which many believed to obtain in 1938, he stated: "We are now not closer together, but farther apart than we were in 1938."

Unfortunately the correctness of Dr. Engelder's statements is borne out by almost every official utterance regarding the union movement on the part of the American Lutheran Church that has been put on record. Numerous publications and constantly reiterated statements testify to the truth of what we say in such a manner as to convince the most skeptical if they will but take the trouble to examine the record.

One publication of the American Lutheran Church which in particular brings out some of the fundamental errors for which it continues to contend most earnestly appeared somewhat more than a year ago. It is titled "In the Interest of Lutheran Unity." (Lutheran Book Concern, Columbus, Ohio.) Not only is this publication an official publication of the American Lutheran Church, but it is one of the most significant documents that appeared in the entire present union movement among Lutherans in America. Without a question, it is also so regarded by its promoters. For, in the American Lutheran Church's campaign of reaching out one hand to the right and—literally—another hand to the left, in an endeavor that is meant to draw all Lutherans of America into one great unionistic fellowship, The Board of Education of the American Lutheran Church, through the presidents of the various synodical bodies, offered to supply every Lutheran minister in the United States and in the Canadian Dominion with a copy of this publication. Besides an introductory "Open Letter to the Lutheran Pastors of the

United States and Canada" by President Em. Poppen of the American Lutheran Church, this publication contains two lectures by Dr. Ren, one on Unionism, and the other on the Scriptures, showing where the American Lutheran Church stands with references to questions bearing on these subjects. Its main appeal is directed to the Missouri Synod in particular.

Strange as it may seem, this publication has up to the present time not been reviewed in any one of the several official Missouri Synod publications. In view of the present circumstances, this must be regarded as ominous silence indeed. We have heard a great deal about truth meeting error these days. But does it not seem that error is sometimes permitted to run rampant while avowed advocates of truth remain strangely silent in this present union movement?

An excellent series of articles on one of the portions of the pamphlet in question, namely, on Dr. Ren's lecture on the Scriptures, has during past months been published in the **Lutheran Sentinel**, official organ of the Norwegian Lutheran Synod, over the signature of Rev. George Lillegard. This series of articles has also been reprinted in the Wisconsin Synod **Quartalschrift**. So that at least some Misourian brethren may be familiar with the official present position of the American Lutheran Church with regard to the Scriptures, the **Confessional Lutheran** will publish the series of articles by Rev. Geo. Lillegard. The first installment of Pastor Lillegard's series of articles appears in this issue of our journal. Also an article on the other lecture contained in the A.L.C. pamphlet on Unionism will be published later.

Let it be said again and again that we do not merely "suspect" the American Lutheran Church of safeguarding un-Scriptural tendencies and false doctrines in statements contained in the **Declaration** which was submitted to the Missouri Synod in the movement towards union in 1938, as some ill-informed brethren have supposed. The American Lutheran Church has plainly stated its mistaken position, and continues to do so over and over again. It boldly asks for toleration of error, and, on such a basis alone, courts—not true doctrinal unity, for which it has never asked—but mere unionistic pulpit and altar fellowship. In view of such a situation, we must ask, among other things, whether we are determined to keep our own pulpits pure, and whether our pews are to remain free from spirits who would insist on the desecration of

our altars. Nothing less than this is at stake in the present union movement.

It may be well to point out also that the contents of the pamphlet "In the Interest of Lutheran Unity" comprises the substance of lectures which Dr. Ren has held at "free" intersynodical conferences during the past three years. Going up and down the land, this sadly erring theologian of the American Lutheran Church has largely become the instructor of Missouri Synod pastors. That is one of the situations which must be faced as long as intersynodical conferences are to be continued in the manner in which they have been held since 1938. If the influence of Dr. Ren's false theology, which, like all error, appeals so strongly to the flesh, is to be nullified, it is important that pastors of the Missouri Synod, and of the Synodical Conference generally, be familiar with the fundamental errors of American Lutheranism, and fortified against any advance that such errors may threaten to make. Only thus can the heritage of truth which is ours be preserved unto ourselves and our children. If there is ever by the grace of God to be a true union between members of the American Lutheran Church and of the Missouri Synod, this can be effected only by our testifying to the truth in no uncertain terms, and while rejecting error in every form, offering to share our treasures of truth with others. It can never be effected by our permitting the errors of others to be imported into our midst.

A careful study of the series of articles on the pamphlet "In the Interest of Lutheran Unity," which the **Confessional Lutheran** has begun to present in this issue, will bear a rich reward for every earnest reader.

P. H. B.

● The Position of the American Lutheran Church With Regard To the Holy Scriptures*

As is known to our readers, the Missouri Synod and the American Lutheran Church have agreed on a set of doctrinal statements which, it is claimed, settle all doctrinal differences between them in matters of church-divisive importance. Some of us, however, have not been satisfied that actual agreement had been reached and have expressed our objections to the statements at issue accordingly.

* This is the first installment of the series of articles by Pastor Lillegard which has been referred to above. The title has been supplied by the editor of *The Confessional Lutheran*.

For this we have been severely criticized as "separatists and fanatics." But "history repeats itself." When the Norwegian Synod adopted "Opgjoer,"** 1912, those who objected to it as a compromise were publicly attacked by Dr. H. G. Stub for deserting the old Norwegian Synod doctrine and adopting a fanatical "New-Missourianism." But then Dr. J. N. Kildahl of the Norwegian United Church published a frank statement, asserting that "Opgjoer," so far from being 'Synod doctrine,' contained only the anti-Missourian teachings for which he had always contended—thus justifying every objection that the "Minority"*** had raised to it. So now; Dr. M. Reu, the leading theologian of the American Lutheran Church, publishes a pamphlet, entitled **IN THE INTEREST OF LUTHERAN UNITY**, which demonstrates that he is as far from adopting "old Missouri" teachings as ever. For in this pamphlet he makes propaganda for "anti-Missourian" views on **UNIONISM** and on **SCRIPTURE**, which should open the eyes of all but the wilfully blind to the hollowness and futility of the so-called "doctrinal agreements" between his Church and the Missouri Synod. His pamphlet was offered free to all Lutheran pastors, and practically all except those of the Missouri Synod received copies. It is, therefore, a public document, officially endorsed by the American Lutheran Church, so that we must judge the doctrinal statements of the A.L.C. in the light of the fuller discussion in Dr. Reu's pamphlet.**** We shall not here discuss the first essay, on **UNIONISM**,***** but only point out that it contends for views regarding prayer-fellowship which the Missouri Synod hitherto has condemned even to the point of barring from its fellowship anyone who actively proclaimed such views. We shall, however, consider more at length his essay on **WHAT IS SCRIPTURE AND HOW CAN WE BECOME CERTAIN OF ITS DIVINE ORIGIN?**

** A Norwegian word meaning "agreement." The unionistic agreement embodied in the "Opgjoer" of 1912 resulted in the organization of the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America by three separate bodies, including the greater portion of the former Norwegian Synod, in 1917.—P.H.B.

*** Those within the Norwegian Synod who refused to endorse the un-Scriptural "Opgjoer." They have perpetuated the Norwegian Synod to this day, and are affiliated with the Synodical Conference.—P.H.B.

**** Dr. Reu was a member of the Commission of the A.L.C. which negotiated with a similar committee of the Missouri Synod, and the chief author of the Declaration of the American Lutheran Church.—P.H.B.

***** This essay will be discussed in a later issue of the Confessional Lutheran.—P.H.B.

A False Emphasis on the "Human Factor" in the Inspiration of the Scriptures***** in

After studying this essay, we understand better why the A.L.C. was not satisfied to accept Missouri's "Brief Statement" on the Holy Scriptures without adding three paragraphs of its own, in which the fact was emphasized that "the authors of the Bible were individual, thinking personalities, each having his peculiar style, his own manner of presentation, using at times even various sources in his hand." For the chief peculiarity of Dr. Reu's essay is that it throughout stresses the **HUMAN** side of the Scripture and attacks the **DIVINE** origin for "degrading the authors of the Biblical books to dead writing machines who without any inner participation wrote down word for word what was dictated to them by the Spirit." He says that "we meet this doctrine in the Lutheran Church occasionally already during the sixteenth century, more frequently in the seventeenth century although it can hardly be called the earmark of the presentation of all orthodox dogmatists"; and adds that "there are hardly many among us who cling to this **MECHANICAL THEORY**." (p. 68.)

When we compare Dr. F. Pieper's thorough presentation of the orthodox doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture in his **CHRISTLICHE DOGMATIK**, we find that he defends those whom Dr. Reu attacks, and proves in detail that there never were any Lutheran teachers who thus "degraded" the authors of the inspired word to mere machines. . . .*****

The contrast between Dr. Reu's treatment of the doctrine of Inspiration and Dr. Pieper's is complete. We shall in later articles call attention to some of the differences in detail. Here we shall make only the further general

***** Title supplied by editor of Confessional Lutheran.—P.H.B.

***** We have omitted the following in the text above, preferring to place it in a footnote here:—

"He says, to quote a brief section: 'It is then, an historically untrue statement to say with regard to the orthodox doctrine of inspiration, as e.g. Luthardt does: "The relationship of the Holy Ghost to Scripture is thought to be, not this that he works by means of the intellectual activity of the Biblical writers, but only externally by means of the hand of the writing persons." Cremer gets even farther away from the path of historical veracity when he says concerning the (Lutheran) dogmatists' doctrine of inspiration: "This doctrine was an out and out innovation. Only the idea of ecstasy was lacking to bring about a renewal of the doctrine of Philo and the old Apologetes, which the Church had with one accord given up in opposition to Montanism. But the lack of this idea only made matters worse, in that the mantic inspiration was degraded to a mechanical inspiration." We see that Cremer lost complete control of the historical facts as well as of himself when he wrote the words quoted above. The ridicule which modern theologians heap on the expressions 'amanuensis, calami (pens),' etc., does neither their intelligence nor their truthfulness credit. (I, 279-280. Tr. from the German by G. O. L.)"—P.H.B.

observation that Dr. Pieper's presentation inspires faith in Scripture as in truth the Word of God, while Dr. Reu's, although aiming to build up faith in the divine origin of Scripture, leaves one with the impression that the whole matter is pretty difficult and doubtful, with nothing better to build upon at times than "a certain holy awe" which, Dr. Reu says, "kept me always from the assumption of errors in the original copies of the Scripture and its parts; even the mere possibility of errors seemed to me excluded by this reverential fear." (P. 70.) Now it is good and right that we all have such reverential fear over against Scripture. But it helps no man to "become certain of the divine origin of the Bible" to advance such subjectivistic arguments. The one answer to every doubt concerning Scripture is the word of Scripture itself. This truth Dr. Reu, indeed, admits also; but only in such a manner that it comes as a sort of "last refuge," instead of being the initial basis, the sole foundation, for faith in Scripture as the Word of God.

It is not strange, then, that the liberal United Lutheran Church, with its many modernistic theologians who openly deny the inspiration of Scripture, should be able to "gulp down" the statement on Scripture which committees of the U.L.C. and the A.L.C. had agreed upon.***** For that statement was in all essentials the same as the paragraphs which the A.L.C. made a part of its agreement with the Missouri Synod, and which leave room for such teachings as these of Dr. Reu with their antagonism to orthodox Lutheran doctrine. So we have this strange situation, that the United Lutheran Church agrees officially with the American Lutheran Church on the doctrine of Scripture, and the American Lutheran Church agrees officially with the Missouri Synod, but the U.L.C. at the same time rejects the Missouri Synod's doctrine. "Two things equal to the same thing are equal to each other." By all the laws of logic, the U.L.C. and the Missouri Synod ought to be officially agreed on the doctrine of Scripture; but as a matter of historical fact, they are not; and yet the A.L.C. agrees with both! Such are the results when broad-minded "middle-of-the-roaders" hold out their hands to both right and left and seek to become the connecting link between opposing

parties. There is something worse than self-deception or intellectual dishonesty at the root of such a situation. It is unfaithfulness to the Word of God, building the walls of Zion with untempered mortar, calling good evil and evil good. And the only remedy is repentance and a return to the sound principles of the Bible which orthodox dogmaticians and "the fathers" championed.

(To be continued)

Geo. O. Lillegard, in the **Lutheran Sentinel** (Norwegian Synod), Jan. 13, 1941.

🔥 A Burning Question

IN the May issue of the **Journal of Theology** Pastor E. J. Boerger, a member of the American Lutheran Church, offers an article on "Free Will and the Grace of God." He touches on certain points of doctrine which have been in dispute in the Lutheran Church of our country for nearly seven decades and which have never been definitely settled to this day. Those who are still unable to see the ambiguities in the Chicago Theses and in the "Declaration" of the American Lutheran Church, behind which pertinent differences are hidden, will find in Pastor Boerger's statements additional evidence for their belief that intersynodical negotiations have been a wonderful success and that the American Lutheran Church has by this time abandoned its old tenets and accepted the doctrine of the Synodical Conference.

However, do Pastor Boerger's statements really justify such an optimistic view? True, he confesses "sola gratia" as well as universal grace. But our opponents have throughout the whole controversy protested that they cling to these two cardinal truths and that all accusations to the contrary are calumnies. Pastor Boerger says many more things which are right and good. But he fails to elucidate one crucial point, and that is the question whether he believes in a **like conduct** or in a **dissimilar** conduct on the part of those on whose hearts the Holy Ghost works through the Word. This is the very difference which sixty-nine years ago caused the whole controversy of which we are speaking.

When Prof. Gottfr. Fritschel first attacked the doctrine of conversion as taught in the Missouri Synod, the main difference lay in this that the Missouri Synod taught a **like conduct** of all hearers of the Word, while Iowa stressed a **dissimilar** conduct, contending that wilful resistance constitutes a **worse** atti-

***** This is a reference to President Knobel's notorious statement at the Omaha Convention of the U.L.C. in 1940, which called forth considerable ridicule upon Lutheranism in the public press. The statement of the A.L.C. in question was adopted by a majority of U.L.C. convention delegates in spite of strong opposition on the part of an even more liberal element that would not "gulp."—P.H.B.

tude than the resistance which the Holy Ghost overcomes in conversion.

But do not the Chicago Theses already admit the **equal guilt** of all men? And does not Pastor Boerger do the same?

Answering these questions, we would say that, as for the Chicago Theses, spokesmen for the other side have repeatedly declared that this expression is correct only if it means that **by nature** all men are in equal guilt, because, in the first place, all men in like manner offer **natural** resistance over against saving grace. But they add that it would be "false doctrine" to refer the term "equal guilt" to the conduct of those also who resist **wilfully**, because one who resists thus "heaps guilt upon guilt", which involves an **additional** guilt and a dissimilar conduct over against the work of the Holy Spirit.

True to the Scriptural teaching, "there is no difference" Rom. 3, 22, the Synodical Conference confesses to this day that the Holy Spirit has in those who are converted overcome **the same resistance** which hinders conversation in the case of those who are lost, thus stressing the equally evil conduct of those who are saved and of those who are not. Hence the expression, "equal guilt" and its equivalents have an entirely different meaning when used by ALC spokesmen from what they have according to our use of the same terms.

Now, any Christian layman who has an ordinary knowledge of the Gospel doctrine is able to see that it makes a world of difference whether I say: "In God's sight I am just as guilty as those who through their own fault are lost," or: "After all, my conduct, before I was converted, was **not** as bad as that of other men who perish." In the final analysis the first is the language of the publican, and the other the language of the pharisee. A Gospel according to which only those are saved who before their conversion do not conduct themselves as badly as others is not the true Gospel anymore, no matter how adroitly such a state of affairs may be veiled.

Pastor Boerger admits that all men are "equally wicked by nature." But this expression may merely indicate the **source** out of which **all** resistance originally flows, namely, the natural depravity of unconverted men. The question is: does the so called wilful resistance constitute a conduct worse than that which the Holy Spirit overcomes in conversion, or is it the same? Therefore, setting aside all else which might be discussed in

Pastor Boerger's article, for the sake of clearing up this all-important point, we ask him to kindly let us know his answer to this question: does he still confess with the former Iowa spokesmen that the expression "equal guilt" is to be restricted to the natural resistance only which is alike in all men by nature, or does he confess with us that it includes the wilful resistance of those who are lost?

If Pastor Boerger would tell us that he agrees with our use of the term, according to which it also refers to the wilful resistance of those who prevent their conversion, he would certainly stand on our side. And if the American Lutheran Church would officially endorse this position, then the main difference between the Missouri Synod and the American Lutheran Church concerning the doctrine of conversion and predestination would be removed. If, however, such a statement can not be obtained; if the American Lutheran Church clings to its old concept and now declares this vital difference to be a mere matter of terminology—cannot then our brethren see that a supposed unity is an illusion?

J. B.

● One of the Simple Questions at Issue

"Now then our question is this: If the American Lutheran Church really is orthodox in all matters with the exception of the point noted (a 'visible side' of the Church) defining its essence, millennialism, union in conversion of the Jews, resurrection of the martyrs, and Antichrist) did Synod do right in declaring them to be non-divisive, or did Synod do wrong?" Dir. M. Graebner, *Proceedings of the Southern Nebraska Synod, 1939*, p. 40.)*

The answer to this question should not be difficult for any true Missourian. Acceptance of the St. Louis union articles of 1938 must be rescinded.

P. H. Faust

● Does the A. L. C. "Declaration" Exclude Millennialism?

"Millennium signifies a period of one thousand years. **Millennialism**, also known as

*Other all-important differences, with regard to Scriptura and Sola Gratia, are not taken into account here. Only the questions referred to, all of which, however, involve the Scriptural principle, were considered in the essay from which we have quoted.

iasm, is the belief that our Lord Jesus Christ will visibly reappear on the earth a thousand years before the end of the world, raise His saints, those who died in the Lord, from the dead, and with these and the believers who are still living at that time reign on earth personally and in great glory for a thousand years, at the expiration of which all those who have died in unbelief will be raised from the dead and the final Judgment will be held.

"This definition, however, presents only a **general** idea of what the great majority of the believers in a millennium are agreed upon. They differ among themselves with regard to many details of their belief. The Premillenarians, for instance, place Christ's visible appearance both before and after the millennium; but the Postmillenarians accept only one such appearance, namely, after the end of that glorious era. The former teach a resurrection of the believers at the beginning, and a resurrection of the unbelievers at the end, of the millennium, while the latter believe only in a general resurrection at the end.

"The **Premillenarians** hold that the millennium is a period of world-wide righteousness, introduced by the sudden, unannounced visible advent of Christ; that the righteous, the believers in Him who is our Righteousness, will then be raised from the dead and reign with Christ on earth; that all Israel will acknowledge Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah; that Satan during this period will be bound and locked in the abyss, but after this will be loosed and make a final, but vain effort to destroy Christ's kingdom; that soon after this attempt He, His angels, and all unbelievers, who are then raised from the dead, will be judged and hurled into the lake of fire to suffer eternal torment.

"The **Postmillenarians** hold, in the main, that through Christian agencies the Gospel will gradually permeate the entire world and the Jews will be converted; that after the thousand-year period there will be a brief apostasy, a falling away from the Christian faith, followed by a dreadful conflict between Christian and evil forces; and that finally and simultaneously there will occur the visible coming of Christ, the resurrection of all the dead, and the judgment of all men, after which the world will be destroyed, and a new world will be created. The Postmillenarians, you see, accept only one visible re-appearance of Christ, namely, at the end of the millennium.

"There are those among the millenarians

who take such passages as Is. 11,7: 'The lion shall eat straw like the ox,' and Is. 65, 25: 'The wolf and the lamb shall feed together' in a literal sense, believing that during the millennium there will be peace, not only among men, but also among the animals, so that they will neither kill nor hurt one another.—Some hold that Jerusalem will be the capital of the world, where Christ will sit on His throne, and that under His rulership His subjects will be free from all evil and live in peace and joy.

"But **all** who hope for a millennium assert that the Church of Christ during that period will no longer be a kingdom under the cross, but a kingdom of glory, ruling over all nations, either converting or subduing all enemies of Christ, abolishing all wars and implements of war (taking Is. 2, 4 literally), and making all Jews Christians (supposed to be found in Rom. 11, 25-31 and Luke 21, 24).

"All millenarians base their teachings chiefly on Rev. 20, 1-10." (**The Millennium and the Bible**, pp. 3-5, by L. A. Herrboth.)*

Does the **Declaration** of the American Lutheran Church exclude every type of Millennialism? It ought to do this, and very definitely. For, the Iowa Synod, incorporated within the American Lutheran Church since its organization in 1929, tolerated Millennialism; and, besides, the American Lutheran Church is even now unwilling to give up affiliation with other church-bodies within the American Lutheran Conference, which tolerate this error.

Section VI of the A. L. C. **Declaration** deals with Millennialism. The first part of this section reads as follows:

"When considering the question concerning the Antichrist, the future conversion of Israel, the resurrection of the martyrs, and the millennial reign of Christ, the fact must not be overlooked that we are dealing here with the correct understanding of prophecy and fulfilment, that this understanding is not always easy, and that even in the days of Christ the believers had an entirely different conception of the fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecy in many points than actually occurred, but that nevertheless the fulfilment coincided exactly with the prophecy. We are certain that the same will be the case with the New Testament prophecy. Not only will the great events

* "Chiliasm is variegated, and dividing it into crassest, crass, and subtle Chiliasm does not always cover the individual cases." F. Pieper, *Christliche Dogmatic*, III, 584.

which even now stand out clearly and unmistakably in the prophecy of Jesus and His apostles—the return of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, the final Judgment, the passing away of the old world and the creation of the new heaven and the new earth, the twofold termination of all history in eternal life or eternal damnation—find their realization, but even the individual details will be fulfilled, though the latter perhaps in a manner entirely different from that which some of the faithful expect on the basis of their understanding of Scripture. However, since all New Testament revelation constitutes a unity, nothing should be taught concerning the subjects named in our introductory sentence that would involve a negation of the following truths: 1. that as Christians we must at all times be ready for the return of Christ; 2. that as Christians we are bound, until the return of Christ, to the use of the means of grace and to the way of salvation revealed in the Gospel; 3. that the Church on earth, until the return of Christ, will continue to be a kingdom of the cross.”** (Proceedings, 1938, p. 224.)

The last sentence quoted should definitely exclude Millennialism of every kind. If Christians are always to be ready for “the return of Christ,” and are bound to the Gospel and are under the cross until that time, this leaves no room for Millennialism, does it? That depends on who is speaking of “the return of Christ.” If a church-body which has consistently repudiated Millennialism, or which at least has never taught or even toler-

ated it, would use that expression, we might be satisfied, without any question, that the church-body meant nothing else than Christ's return on the **Last Day**. We would advise that church-body to modify that expression, if it were dealing with Millennialists who expect a return of Christ **before** the Last Day. But we would not wonder what the church-body meant with that expression. However, what should we think when that unmodified expression is used by the A. L. C., a church-body which has tolerated and is tolerating Millennialism? Will anyone urge charity here, meaning that we must understand that expression, as the A. L. C. uses it, in the Scriptural sense as referring to Christ's return on the Last Day?*** We are convinced that charity does not demand this, but rather permits us to understand that expression in its Millennialistic sense. For it cannot be contrary to love to understand a man according to what he **means**. If an “anti-millennialist” speaks of the return of Christ, it would certainly be evil to suspect him of purposely leaving room in that unmodified expression for Millennialism. But what shall we do when a Millennialist or a friend of Millennialists uses that expression? To a Millennialist “the return of Christ,” as it is used in the part of the **Declaration** now under consideration, **cannot** mean His return on the **Last Day**. For, according to Millennialists, the Church will not be a kingdom of the cross until Christ's return on the **Last Day**, but only until the imagined return of Christ for a millennial reign.

The same expression, “the return of Christ,” is used in Section VI, B, 1 of the **Declaration**, and would be **superfluous** there, if it meant Christ's return on the **Last Day**. For there we read:

“The answer to the question whether in the **future that is still before us, prior to the return of Christ**, a special unfolding and personal concentration of the antichristian power already present now and thus a still more comprehensive fulfilment of II Thess. 2 may occur, we leave to the Lord and Ruler of the Church and world history.”

“Prior to the return of Christ” has been emphasized by us. This expression is superfluous here, except to a Millennialist who imagines a return of Christ before the Last Day. For, certainly, no development of the present antichristian power can occur after Christ's return on the **Last Day**. With Millennialists,

** There are at least two confused thoughts in the introductory sentence above:

1. When the A. L. C. asserts that “even in the days of Christ the believers had an entirely different conception of the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy in many points than actually occurred,” it states a general fact. But it uses this fact wrongly here, namely, for the purpose of showing that the understanding of Scriptural prophecy is not always easy. For it seems to forget that believers in the days of Christ were, for the most part, misled by false teachers of a pronounced “millennialistic” type, who based their errors on a falsely literal interpretation of Old Testament prophecy concerning the Christ and His kingdom. One need but study the Gospels to learn how Jewish “Millennialism” confused the minds even of Christ's disciples and caused Him much other trouble. Scriptural prophecy naturally cannot be clear to such prejudiced minds, but this unclearness is subjective.

It is implied that the correct understanding of the prophecy concerning the Antichrist may not be easy. This is another way of implying that Scripture may not speak so clearly about Antichrist, that he can definitely be identified when he is revealed. If we judge the **Declaration** rightly here, then we must say that this implication in regard to the understanding of prophecies concerning the Antichrist is false. Scripture speaks clearly concerning the Antichrist. It must do so. The **revelation** of Antichrist is a sign of the Last Day. II Thess. 2, 3; I John 2, 18. But an unclear sign of the Last Day would not serve its purpose. It would be valueless as a warning. “For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?” I Cor. 14, 8. Any unclearness at this point must therefore, be subjective. Cf. Matt. 16, 1-3.

*** So Committee 16 understood it. Cf. Proceedings, 1938, p. 230.

however, there may be a question whether the aforesaid development will come before the "millennial return" of Christ or after the Millennium during the "little season" of Revelation 20. Well, perhaps the A. L. C. would admit that the expression is superfluous here, and strike it, so that no Millennialist could find cover here. We don't know.

Moreover, at the beginning of Section VI "the millennial reign of Christ" seems to be put into the same category with "the Antichrist," just as if the former were as certain as the latter.**** In other words, the **Declaration** implies that the "millennial reign of Christ" is as much a certainty as "the Antichrist."

Finally, Section VI, B, grants toleration to certain doctrinal errors, such as a future conversion of Israel and a particular resurrection of the martyrs, which are usually connected with other Millennialistic false doctrine.*****

Therefore, we cannot believe, on the basis of the Declaration, that the A. L. C. repudiates every form of Millennialism, as indeed it should. If the A. L. C. nevertheless does repudiate it, the **Declaration** contains no sure evidence of this. We wish that it did. Since it does not, this, too, is a reason why acceptance of the St. Louis Union Articles must be rescinded.

D. L. Pfeiffer.

● The Dogmatic-Historical Background Of the Present Union Movement

5. Objective and Subjective Justification (Continued)

In the course of years polemics against the doctrine of objective justification have taken on a more moderate tone. We see this, for instance, in a passage from Lenski's commentary on the Letter to the Romans

**** As a matter of fact, there is no such thing as a "millennial reign" of Christ. Inasmuch as "millennium" means a thousand years, and Rev. 20, 4 says of certain souls, that "they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years," one might speak of a millennial reign of certain human souls, provided one did not put a wrong meaning into the words. But Rev. 20 says nothing at all of any special reign of Christ. Scripture clearly testifies that Christ's reign is unchangeable forever. Hebr. 13, 8.

***** Dr. F. Pieper: "The idea of a still future general conversion of the Jews is usually connected with Chiliasm." *Christliche Dogmatik*, III, 592. "The doctrine of a particular bodily resurrection prior to the so-called thousand-year reign, has ever been regarded in our church as the mark of gross and damnable Chiliasm," *Lehre und Wehre*, xviii, 75. (In connection with this statement from *Lehre und Wehre* it should be noted that the "first resurrection" of Rev. 20 is prior to the "thousand years," and that the assumption of a particular bodily resurrection is allegedly based on Rev. 20, 4.)

which is thoroughly examined by Prof. Meyer in the article we have referred to. In his treatment of the pertinent passages Dr. Lenski even is ready to grant the universal objective justification in a certain sense. He only criticizes the terms as being open to misunderstanding and thus dangerous. And yet we find, in part, a repetition of his earlier charges. His exact position is not made entirely clear by his words. We read:

"The great theme of Romans is the Sinner's **Personal Justification** by Faith. That the basis of this personal justification is Christ's blood and righteousness, effective for the whole world on the day that He died and rose again, Paul brings out in many places, beginning with 3, 22 etc. Especially notable is 5, 10-11 where we have Paul's own term for what Christ has done: **Katallage** (*katallassein*) reconciliation (to reconcile). This reconciliation embraces the whole world of sinners and was thus 'without faith, prior to and apart from faith.' When Christ died on the Cross He cried: **Tetelesthai**, It has been finished! (i.e. and stands so forever). Then and there the whole world of men was reconciled to God by Christ. The resurrection of Christ only corroborated the tremendous fact of the world's reconciliation. The Scripture term for this is **katallage**, reconciliation,—the whole world of sinners was made completely other (*allos*; *kata* perfective). Christ's resurrection shows that God accepted Christ's sacrifice for the world, that Christ's blood had indeed reconciled the whole world to God. One may call God's raising up Christ God's **declaration** to this effect, and because it is such a declaration one may call it the universal justification of the whole world.' Yet to use the word 'justification' in this way is no gain; for it is liable to confuse the ordinary man. We are fully satisfied with the Scriptural word 'reconciliation.' Based on this **apolytrosis** (ransoming) or **katallage** (reconciliation), 3, 24; 5, 11 is the individual's **Personal Justification** in the instant the power of the Gospel brings a sinner to faith.

"When thus correctly used, we may speak of **allgemeine Rechtfertigung** and of **persoenliche Rechtfertigung**. Since both are equally objective, both judicial declarations made by God in heaven, it should be seen that it is confusing to call the one 'objective' and the other 'subjective.' This terminology is inexact to say no more. In these high and holy matters inexactness in terminology is certainly to be avoided.

"The danger is that by 'subjective justification' we may lose the objective divine act of

God by which He declares the individual sinner righteous **ek pisteos eis pistin**, in the instant faith (embracing Christ) is wrought in him, leaving only the divine declaration regarding the whole world of sinners, calling this an **actus simplex**, the only forensic act of God, and expanding this to mean that God declared every sinner free from guilt when Christ was raised, so many millions, even before they were born, irrespective of faith, apart from and without faith. Surely this wipes out 'justification by faith alone', of which the Scriptures speak page after page. No sinner is declared righteous by God, save by faith alone. Only his faith is reckoned to him for righteousness. This righteousness is the theme of Romans, which so mightily emphasizes **ek pisteos eis pistin** and **dia pisteos**. Any confusion on this supreme matter is bound to entail the most serious consequences." (pg. 86-88.)

Prof. Meyer replies to this:

"We note that Dr. Lenski's main objection to the term objective and subjective justification springs from a fear of confusion. But this danger seems remote, since the terms, even though perhaps not as exact as might be desired, yet have by usage acquired a clearly defined meaning. Also the terms he suggests, **allgemeine und persoенliche Rechtfertigung** (universal and personal justification) might be misused to create false impressions.

"We note furthermore that Dr. Lenski differentiates between (objective) justification and (objective) reconciliation, accepting the latter while rejecting the former, at least as a term. But Paul evidently uses both terms interchangeably as denoting the same thing. Rom. 5, 9-11; and he defines reconciliation in terms of justification in II Cor. 5, 19: God **reconciled** the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.

"The point Dr. Lenski makes when he says: 'To use the word justification in this way is no gain,' is not decisive. If the Scriptures use the word justification to express what is technically known as objective justification, then this use is sufficiently motivated. In the closing words of the quotation Dr. Lenski comes dangerously close to denying the doctrine itself." (*Quartalschrift*, Jan. '40, pg. 32-34).

In the succeeding sections of Dr. Lenski's Interpretation we find remarks like the following:

"This logical future is used especially by those who alter Paul's words so as to mean that all men were justified, pardoned, forgiven 1900 years ago, **so that no act of God's justifying the individual believer** in the instant of faith follows." and again: "Nowhere in the Bible is any man constituted or declared righteous without faith, before faith, all asseverations and argumentations to the contrary notwithstanding."

Accordingly, Dr. Lenski's position, at least as far as it is expressed in his Commentary on Romans, is somewhat shifting and unclear. On the one hand, he admits that the term "universal justification", when correctly understood, is admissible. On the other hand, he relapses into his old tactics, distorting our doctrine of objective justification as though it admitted of no subsequent subjective justification by faith, and then he rejects this distorted view of our teaching as contrary to Scripture.

Obviously a difference of such vast import as this difference in the doctrine of justification must be removed before Church fellowship with the A.L.C. can be established.

What has been done hitherto to achieve doctrinal unity on this point?

In the Chicago Theses the doctrine of objective justification is not mentioned at all. Apparently the question was not discussed at all during the ten years in which these Theses were in the making, the difference simply being overlooked.

In the Declaration of the A.L.C., justification receives incidental mention in connection with the statement on election. The words read: "He purposes to justify those who have come to faith." That is all. It has been pointed out, and very properly so, that the perfect tense, "those who have come to faith," gives room for the old Ohio and Iowa error: first a man must believe, then his sins are forgiven—which is tantamount to a rejection of objective justification.

Nor must we overlook the fact that the Minneapolis Theses which to this day are a binding confession of the A. L. Conference know only of a justification of repentant and believing sinners. The Thesis on Justification reads:

"Justification is not an act in man but an act by God in heaven, declaring the repentant and believing just or stating that he is regarded as such on account of the imputation of the righteousness of Christ by faith."

It is, therefore, not enough that representatives of the A. L. C. tell our representatives that they, too, accept both objective and subjective justification. We have seen in the case of Dr. Lenski that one may grant the validity of a term which formerly was condemned, but hedge it in by reservations which cast doubt upon actual unanimity of doctrine. Here, too, for the sake of true unity there is need for a clear, unequivocal confession on the part of the A. L. C.

— J. B.

⊙ Unionism

"Religious unionism consists in joint worship and work of those not united in doctrine. Its essence is an agreement to disagree. In effect, it denies the doctrine of the clearness of Scripture. It would treat certain doctrines as fundamental or essential and others as non-essential to Christian unity—a proposition which could be defended on only one of two premises: that God either was unable to reveal His will and mind in such a manner as not to be misunderstood or was not willing so to reveal Himself. In the former case the wisdom of God is attacked; in the second, His goodness. A Christian who believes that God has clearly spoken through the prophets and apostles and through the Lord Jesus Christ cannot be a unionist. The indifferent and pacifist stand of the unionist is condemned in all those texts which bid us beware of false prophets and to be separate from those who deny the truth. Titus 1, 13-14; 1 Tim. 2, 12; 6, 14; 2 Tim. 3, 5; 6, 3-5; Matt. 7, 15; Jer. 23, 28; Acts 20, 29; Rom. 16, 17; 1 John 4, 1; 2 John 10-11. In the light of these texts all joint ecclesiastical efforts for religious work (missionary, educational, etc.) and particularly joint worship and mixed promiscuous prayer among those who confess the truth and those who deny any part of it, is sinful unionism. If we hold to the doctrine of the clearness of Scripture, such compromise of the truth cannot be tolerated, nor can it be defended by the plea that religious differences, after all, rest upon misunderstanding. When the Lutheran and Reformed theologians held a conference at Wittenberg to find a basis for union, Luther addressed Melancthon as follows (1536): 'In the first place, it will never do to admit that the whole controversy is based on misunderstanding. While this has often been said by our opponents and probably will be said again, it is simply not true as concerns ourselves, nor is it true regarding our opponents. To

say that it was all a mistake would be a poor settlement, unworthy of so important a matter. In the second place, it will not serve to make any compromise for the sake of union. A compromise is in itself untruthful because its purpose is to unite things which are mutually opposed. Moreover, if a compromise is once accepted, consciences become so unsettled that they will finally believe nothing at all.'

"Upon this clear and powerful utterance of the Reformer, the theologian Rudelbach remarks as follows: 'When the difference is clearly understood and when controversy goes to every necessary length, we may conclude that there is a true love of union. The more careless we are in stating the differences and the more anxious to hide the sores, the farther removed we are from that unity of the Spirit which is the innermost essence of all true union.' The necessity of polemics and controversy as over against a religious pacifism, which demands peace at any price, was set forth by Luther on another occasion in the following terms: 'The Christian minister must not only be a pastor who instructs his flock how they may be true Christians, but must also battle off the wolves lest they attack the sheep and seduce and destroy them with false doctrine. The devil is never at rest. But there are today many people who believe that the Gospel should be preached, but that we must not raise our voices against the wolves and preach against high churchmen. But even if I preach correctly and shepherd the flock with sound doctrine, I neglect a duty if I do not warn the sheep against the wolves. For what kind of builder would I be if I were to pile up masonry and then stand by while another tears it down? The wolf does not object to our leading the sheep upon good pasture;—the sheep that have been fattened are the more eagerly sought by him;—what he cannot tolerate is that the watchdogs stand on their guard, ready to give him battle.'

The striving for greatness in numbers and influence is a fruitful source of unionistic movements. . . . Dr. Loy (Lutheran, Ohio Synod), in his discussion of the **Augsburg Confession**, has rightly said: ". . . Even Lutherans are enticed upon the wrong road when they are induced to lay great stress upon their numbers and to fancy that their union in larger organizations will give them more power. The power for all legitimate purposes of the Church lies in the means of grace. Numbers may give us prestige and in that respect give us larger opportunity to ply these means. But it is an erring and disloyal

thought that any concession in regard to the purity of the Word and Sacraments which might increase the number of believers, who alone constitute the Church, is permissible. A little company can do more by fidelity to the Lord and His Gospel and a faithful plying of these means in season and out of season, than could that company increased tenfold by a surrender to the liberal sentiment of men who cannot brook the exclusiveness of Christianity in its teaching that Christ can save and only Christ shall rule the congregation of the saved'."

Concordia Cyclopaedia.

Looking for a Visible Side Of the Invisible Church

Most of our modern Christians will not allow it possible that the day of judgment is at hand. The world must be converted first. They will not so dishonor Christ and His institutes as to admit the nearness of the end, when yet so much remains to be achieved. They are infinitely indignant, and all their feelings are inflamed with holy resentment, at the thought of the Gospel being a failure, which they say it must needs be of Christ were soon to come. And when we speak of the evident marks of the nearing of the great day of God Almighty, they sneer at us as Adventists, and post us as fanatics, and have a hundred conclusive reasons why we should not be listened to, even though we have for witness the plain and explicit words of Christ and His Apostles. They say we quench the spirit of missions and Christian enterprise; that we depreciate Christianity's power; that we dishonor the Holy Ghost and the virtue of God's truth; that we undermine the faith,

betray the Christian cause, dampen people's enjoyment of their religion, cut off all hope from the efforts of men and the progress of things, and play the part of croakers, religious cowards, and theological imbeciles, too insipid and diseased to be considered right Christians!

Their idea is that men of genuine mettle must stand fast in the hope of better times, looking and working in Church and State for a grand triumph and glorious millennium in this world yet before the day of judgment. The only trouble they see is that the old ways of doing things are superannuated and effete. What they call for is simply a new departure. Only let the old churchism be abandoned! Let the laymen have a chance! Let the women preach! Open prayer-meetings in the theatres! Give the helm to men of "snap" in place of consecrated drones! Cast off creeds, and isms, and sacraments! Let there be liberty, equality, fraternity, and all join shoulder to shoulder for one grand conflict with the aliens, shouting the watchwords "God and Victory," deaf to everything beside! And they are sure the world, from one end to the other, shall soon ring out the jubilee of Gospel triumph and millennial glory!

Such is the spirit and such the popular belief and inculcation of those who call themselves advanced Christians. And so it will continue, the spirit of the Jewish zealots re-enacting itself in the great city of Christendom, the blasphemous conceit and apostasy increasing every day, till the consummation comes, and blots the base fraud from the face of the earth.—(Joseph A. Seiss, **Lectures on the Gospels**, 1876 Vol. II, p. 1107 f.)

—P. H. B.

THE CONFESSIONAL LUTHERAN

Published In The Interest Of Ecumenical Lutheranism

MOTTO: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."—1 Cor. 1, 10.

REV. PAUL H. BURGDOFF
Editor, Clinton, Iowa

REV. J. BUENGER
Assistant Editor

REV. C. M. GULLERUD
Contributing Editor

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IN THIS ISSUE: — Was the Term "Non-Fundamentals" Used as Identical with the Term "Open Questions" in the St. Louis Resolutions of 1938? — The Position of the A. L. C. with Regard to the Scriptures — The

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Was The Term "Non-Fundamentals" Used As Identical With The Term "Open Questions" In The St. Louis Resolutions Of 1938?

The Answer Of The Ft. Wayne Convention.

In its discussion of Lutheran Union the **Lutheran Witness** has stated, under the heading "In the Matter of Non-Fundamentals:"

"In order to have a correct picture of all that is involved, it is necessary to consider that

"1. The term "non-fundamentals" is not used in the **Brief Statement**.

"2. The term is not used by the American Lutheran Church Committee in its **Declaration**.

"3. The term is not used by our Union Committee No. 16 (1938) when it reports 1938.

"4. The term is used only by Resolutions Committee No. 16 (1839) when it reports on the union matter, and it is there limited to the four points which we discussed two weeks ago." (Concerning Antichrist, the Conversion of Israel, the Resurrection of the Martyrs, and the "thousand years" of Rev. 20.) "It is there used as identical

with the term 'open questions', concerning which our own **Brief Statement** says, Sect. 44 . . . 'Open questions must remain open questions.'"

"Another term applied to **such** non-fundamental points in theology is 'theological problem'." (Aug. 6, 1940, p. 275.)

If what the **Lutheran Witness** says here were correct, this would constitute a serious indictment indeed of Resolutions Committee 16 and the 1938 Convention of Synod which adopted its Report.

However, before we dare permit such an indictment to stand, we are compelled by the Eighth Commandment and the Law of Love to ask whether it is true and correct. We therefore wrote the secretary of Committee 16 (1938) regarding this matter. The letter of the editor of the **Confessional Lutheran** to the secretary of the 1938 resolutions committee (16) follows:—

"It is very important for me to know whether the term "non-fundamentals" was used by Committee 16 as identical with the term "open questions" with reference to the well-known Four Points of doctrine in its report to the 1938 convention of Synod. I believe that you were secretary of the committee in question, and I am therefore turning to you

with the request that you kindly give though the information I desire." purity might the secretary, Rev. C. Abel, replied:—

"If I understand the tenor of your question correctly, the answer is a decisive: No!

"There is a wide gulf between 'non-fundamentals' and 'open questions.' On this all members of Committee 16 are and were agreed. The 'non-fundamentals,' so-called, are Biblical doctrines, clearly expressed, not essential to salvation. However, to deny them becomes an essential error. 'Open Questions': such viewpoints not definitely revealed in Scripture.

"The non-fundamentals' become divisive when, through **propaganda**, divisions are caused. This distinction was upheld by Committee 16."

Accordingly, the only conclusion which can be drawn is this that what the **Lutheran Witness** has charged against the 1938 Resolutions Committee 16 represents an unwarranted insinuation in the discussion of the present union movement.

This should have been clear from the report of the committee itself. For, in speaking of the Four Points concerning the doctrine of the Last Things for which the **Declaration** of the American Lutheran Church representatives asks tolerance, the committee expressly stated and made it clear beyond misunderstanding that, so far as the historic position of the Missouri Synod is concerned, the A. L. C. **Declaration** "asks tolerance for certain teachings and interpretations which have been rejected in our circles;" not for "open questions" which "must remain open questions"! The committee recommended, moreover, that as regards these points "we endeavor to establish **full** agreement and that our Committee on Lutheran Union be instructed to devise ways and means of reaching this end;" not that the four points be declared open questions, such as the **Lutheran Witness** has mistakenly declared them to be. That recommendation was adopted. Whatever else may be said about the St. Louis Resolutions—and the **Confessional Lutheran** has time and again shown their unacceptability and untenability—there is in the entire report of Committee 16 not the least hint of "open questions" which "must remain open questions." We can only repeat that the charge which the **Lutheran Witness** has

raised against Committee 16 is a mistake one. It is indeed unfortunate that the **Lutheran Witness** has so seriously misunderstood the St. Louis Resolutions, particularly also since the situation for which it contends would put error on a par with truth. The least the editors can do is to hasten to correct their far-reaching mistake. That is demanded by the law of truth and by the law of love which "rejoiceth in the truth." Similar mistakes in contentions of the senior editor of the **Lutheran Witness** in the "trial balloon" magazine the **American Lutheran** (Dec., 1939, and Jan., 1940) should be corrected at the same time.

The Ft. Wayne Resolutions of the Missouri Synod (1941) seek to make impossible any liberal misinterpretation of the position of the Missouri Synod such as we have referred to. For they ask that it be understood "that the term 'non-fundamental doctrines' which has been used should not be made to convey the idea that anything revealed in Scripture, although not absolutely necessary for salvation, may be denied." (**Proceedings of the 38th Regular Convention, 1941**, p. 302.) The Scriptures, for instance, reveal that blindness, or hardness of heart, is happened to Israel according to the flesh (the Jewish nation) until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, that is, to the end of time. (Rom. 11, 25.) In the face of this Scriptural truth, the American Lutheran Church representatives informed the Missouri Synod in 1938 that some find the false doctrine of a universal conversion of all Jews indicated in Rom. 11, 25, 26 and that acceptance of a conversion of the Jews must not be regarded as divisive of church-fellowship if the Missouri Synod wants the American Lutheran Church to stand ready officially to declare itself in doctrinal agreement with it and to enter pulpit-and altar-fellowship with it. (**General Proceedings, 1938**, p. 229, 226.) That is one of the Four Points concerning the doctrine of the Last Things for which the American Lutheran Church asks tolerance and which is referred to as a non-fundamental doctrine in the 1938 resolutions of the Missouri Synod. That such matters of (false) doctrine dare never be regarded as open questions is made emphatically clear by the Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod (Par. 42, 44.) to which the Missouri Synod again confessed itself at Ft. Wayne (**Proceedings**, p. 302). To demand that such points be regarded as open questions not only constitutes a denial of the doctrinal position of the Missouri Synod. It involves a denial of clear Scripture itself.

P. H. B.

❶ The Position Of The American Lutheran Church With Regard To The Holy Scriptures

By Rev. Geo. O. Lillegard

(Continued)

Revelation and Inspiration

In an earlier article, we called attention to Dr. M. Reu's essay on "What Is Scripture?" published under the title "**In the Interest of Lutheran Unity,**" and criticized its emphasis on the human elements in Scripture instead of the divine. Another strange feature of this essay is its failure to distinguish between **revelation** and **inspiration**. In fact, it confuses the two concepts completely, arguing throughout for the inspiration of Scripture on the basis that it is "the history of the revelation and self-disclosure of God in its gradual development from the first beginnings to its final consummation" (p. 52), and that its writers received revelations from God. After reading Dr. Reu's involved argument, we understand why the American Lutheran Church was not satisfied to accept the Missouri Synod's **Brief Statement** on the Holy Scripture without adding qualifying paragraphs of their own. **The Brief Statement** gives an excellent definition of Inspiration, but the word "revelation" occurs nowhere in it. So the A. L. C. had to add this "The Bible... is the Word of God, **His permanent revelation**, aside from which, until Christ's return in glory, no other is to be expected."

But the fact is that God has revealed Himself to men by His work of creation (Ps. 19, etc.), as well as by His Word, and continually reveals His power and glory by His government of the world and His care for the Church of Christ. Furthermore, it is quite possible to believe that the Bible contains "the record of revelation" without therefore believing in it as God's own word. For even a purely human history might present a correct record of the deeds and words by which God revealed Himself to men. Dr. U. V. Korén stresses the orthodox Bible doctrine on this point in his address on "The Inspiration of Holy Scripture," 1908: "We can see from Scripture itself that there is a difference between revelation and inspiration. While we by revelation understand a direct communication by God to man of things which man otherwise could not know, inspiration is a unique, powerful operation of the Holy Ghost upon the men whom He has chosen to be His instruments whether for speech

or for writing. While revelation is given by God through 'the Word' who from eternity 'was with God and was God,' inspiration is given by God the Holy Ghost. Even the patriarchs had revelations, but not all of them were inspired to communicate them in writing. Thus we have no writings of the prophets Elijah and Elisha. St. Paul had revelations and was inspired to write them down. Of St. Luke it is not said that he had any revelation, but the Church of God has always recognized that his writings are inspired." (Tr. from the Norwegian by G. O. L.)

It is important to recognize the distinction between **revelation** and **inspiration**, not only because it is a scriptural distinction, but because all those who deny or question the inspiration of every part of Scripture invariably confuse them and base their objections to the inspiration of certain parts of the Bible on that confusion. Thus they may accept John 3, 16 as inspired, because it is obviously a revelation of God's love, but will not be so sure about Gen. 12, 6 or I Cor. 7, 25 or II Tim. 4, 13, because they are not such revelations. If a certain part of Scripture does not have direct religious value, but deals only with "historical, geographical, and other secular matters," they do not see why it should have to be accepted as the inerrant, inspired Word of God at all. Or they will, like Dr. Reu, seek to measure the value of Scripture passages by "their distance from the center," Christ, or by "the stage of revelation in which they are found." (P. 48.) In this way, Dr. Reu even is led to contradict II Tim. 3, 15-17 and to argue that the "all Scripture" in it cannot mean "every Scripture passage," "because not every Scripture passage, although written down under the influence of the Holy Spirit, is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, etc. (f. e. the passage Gen. 12, 6; 'and the Canaanite was then in the land')." So according to this it is only "the whole of Scripture" that can be considered "profitable," not every single part of it; and we can understand better why the A. L. C. had to **supplement** the Missouri Synod's **Brief Statement** with this: "... the separate books of the Bible constitute an **organic whole** without contradiction and error, John 10, 35, and are rightly called the Word of God."

In this connection, Dr. Reu inveighs against those who on the basis of II Tim. 3, 15 f. regard "all doctrinal statements on the same level, like the paragraphs of a code of laws so that one could dive into it (Scripture) at random pick out a truth in the form of a

Scripture passage and apply it to the given case.—Many a so-called Scripture proof of the old dogmatics was manufactured in just that way. As Hauck once said, sometimes the whole house of Scripture was ransacked and what was found at times in the most obscure place furnished the Scriptural basis for a certain dogmatical thesis. And a still greater evil crept in. The idea was encouraged that the whole divine revelation consisted in nothing but the transmission of specific truths and concepts and that consequently the whole of Christianity, established on this basis, would be primarily or exclusively a matter of the intellect." (P. 47-8.) But it is just with regard to such statements that Dr. F. Pieper says in his "Christliche Dogmatik," p. 243-4: "The Scripture-principle is abandoned and in place of it the human ego installed as teacher in the Christian Church,—through the demand that the Christian teachings should be drawn not from the Scripture passages which treat of the individual doctrines (*sedes doctrinae*), but from 'the whole of Scripture.' This phrase, which certainly yields no intelligible meaning, was given new popularity by Schleiermacher" (the father of Modernism). "But this senseless phrase has been adopted by practically all the chief representatives of modern theology, from the most extreme 'left' to the farthest 'right'. We find it also in Ihmels and Hofmann" (Theologians whom Dr. Reu quotes with approval). "Kliefoth has correctly called—this contrast between the whole of Scripture and the individual Scripture statements 'a phrase that cannot be realized in practice'. The fact is that we can come to the whole of Christian teaching only by taking the individual doctrines out of those passages—these always to be viewed in their context of course—which treat of the doctrines concerned." (Tr. from the German by G. O. L.)

Dr. Pieper also says (p. 68-9): "Modern theologians—apply a whole series of bad names to the deducing of the Christian doctrine from Scripture, such as: Intellectualism, Biblicism, letter-theology, mechanical understanding of Scripture, treating Scripture as if it were a textbook of laws, a code of laws fallen from heaven, a paper pope, etc." Since most of these "bad names" are found in Dr. Reu's essay, directed against those who hold the traditional Lutheran doctrine of inspiration, we do not see how we can escape clasping him with these "modern theologians," though he may, indeed, occupy the extreme "right" among them. But he who sits at all with scoffers at the inspiration of every jot and tittle of God's Word cannot be counted

with those who obey that word. (Ps. 1, 1.) Nor is it possible to build orthodox doctrine with Modernistic bricks. On the contrary, those who try to occupy a "middle-of-the-road" position between Modernism and orthodoxy on any point of Bible doctrine must come under the condemnation of Rev. 3, 15-16: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth."—**Lutheran Sentinel** (Norwegian Synod), Jan. 27, 1941.

(To be Continued)

⊙ The Doctrine Concerning The Conversion Of Israel

This doctrine has recently come into unusual prominence. For it is expressly mentioned in the "doctrinal basis" of the Missouri Synod for future church-fellowship with the American Lutheran Church. This doctrine is mentioned in the **Brief Statement** of the Missouri Synod as a "type of Millennialism," against which Scripture "clearly" testifies. Sect. 42. But another, part of the "doctrinal basis," namely, the **Declaration** of the American Lutheran Church, grants toleration to this type of Millennialism as follows: "With reference to the question concerning the conversion of Israel, which some find indicated in Rom. 11: 25, 26; we declare with Dr. Walther that to assume such a conversion 'must not be regarded as a cause for division' (**Milwaukee Kolloquium**, p. 156)."* It is not our present aim to show that the "doctrinal basis" contradicts itself by rejecting at one point what it tolerates at another, but rather to discuss the doctrine concerning the conversion of Israel.

Of course, the salvation of "Israel" is taught (not merely "indicated") in Rom. 11, 25, 26 and other passages of Scripture. But when the **Declaration** speaks of the "conversion of Israel," it means a future and general conversion of Israel according to the flesh. It means, as Committee 16 understands it, "a universal conversion of all Jews before the end of the world" (**Synodical Proceedings**, 1938, p. 229). In other words, the **Declaration** refers to the Millennialistic notion that most (if not all) of the Jews of some future period of time will be converted to Christ. Usually, this notion is connected with some more or less complete system of Millennialism, accord-

* Incidentally, Dr. Walther did not say this. Cf. **Confessional Lutheran**, August, 1940, p. 53.

ing to which the "conversion of the Jews" will usher in the "Millennium."

Israel According To The Flesh and Israel According To The Spirit

Now, when we speak of Israel according to the flesh, some may wonder what other kind of Israel there can be. According to Scripture there is another kind, namely, **spiritual** Israel or Israel according to the **spirit**. There are natural descendants of Abraham. They are the Jews of all ages. They constitute Israel according to the **flesh** or the Jewish nation. To this Israel Paul refers in the words: "Behold Israel **after the flesh**" (1 Cor. 10, 18). But there are also **spiritual** descendants of Abraham. They are the **believing** Jews of all ages. They constitute **spiritual** Israel.**

Jesus observed the distinction between Israel according to the flesh and spiritual Israel, when He said to the Jews, "I know that **ye are Abraham's seed**" (John 8,37), and (a little later), "**If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham**" (v. 39). St. Paul teaches the same distinction. He says, Rom. 9,6-8, "Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, in Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed." We might paraphrase thus: God's promise to save "Israel" is fully effective. For they are not all "Israel," which are of Israel: neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all "children"; but, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called." That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted for the "seed".

The distinction between Israel according to the flesh and Israel according to the spirit is comparable to the distinction between the visible Church and the invisible Church. The visible Church comprises all who **profess** the Christian faith, but the invisible Church all who **have** the Christian faith. Indeed, one might speak of visible Israel and invisible Israel. Visible Israel would then be all who

are **born** Jews, or all who are outwardly Jews, that is, the Jewish nation of all ages. And invisible Israel would be all who would be all who are **inwardly** Jews or truly children of God, that is, **believing** Jews of all ages. "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward of the flesh; but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God" (Rom. 2, 28-29). Therefore, when a stranger speaks of the conversion of **Israel**, one may properly ask which Israel he means: Israel according to the flesh (the Jewish nation of all ages), or Israel according to the spirit (believing Jews of all ages). The American Lutheran Church is no stranger here. We know that she does not mean the salvation of spiritual Israel (which indeed is not in controversy), when she speaks of a conversion of Israel. She means the conversion of Israel according to the flesh, which we deny.

Israel of the Divine Promise

God unconditionally promises to save Israel. But the assumption of a future and general conversion of the Jews is based on the further assumption that those Bible passages which unconditionally promise the salvation of "Israel," refer to Israel according to the **flesh** or the Jewish nation as such. Chief among such Bible passages is the following: "I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. And so **all Israel shall be saved,**" etc. Rom. 11, 25-26. To some this passage allegedly indicates a **general** conversion of the Jews in the **future**.

"All Israel shall be saved." If we consider these words without reference to their context, they teach either that **all** Israel according to the flesh (the Jewish nation of all ages) will be saved, or that **all** spiritual Israel (believing Jews of all ages) will be saved. If we assume that the Jewish nation is meant wherever the salvation of Israel is unconditionally promised by God, then we **must** teach, according to the words just quoted, that **all Jews of all ages** will be saved, no Jew excepted, not even Judas Iscariot. For "**ALL** Israel", whether fleshly or spiritual, is **EVERY** Israelite, **EVERY** son of Abraham, either according to the flesh or according to the spirit. We dare not weaken any "all" of the Gospel. If we do, then the Gospel will no longer be a means of strengthening faith, as it is indeed, but will be a means of weakening faith. For

** We realize that many orthodox teachers regard spiritual Israel as the whole number of elect Jews and elect Gentiles. However, for our present purpose it is hardly necessary to compare the merits of this interpretation with the merits of the one which we are following. If the reader prefers the Spiritual Israel of Rom. 9 to 11 as all the elect, and to substitute this view for ours, he will still find the idea of a general conversion of the Jews to be false.

"all" certainly includes me, but less than all may not include me. The "all" must stand in its full force in Rom. 11, 26, that every penitent Israelite may have **sure** hope. "For all the promises of God in Him are Yea, and in Him Amen. . . ." II Cor. 1, 20. A man must either teach that all Jews of all ages will finally be saved, as more consistent Millennialists do, or he must insist that "Israel" in Rom. 11, 26 is **spiritual** Israel. Only thus can he preserve the significance of "all."

Now if one choose the first alternative, and teach that all Jews of all ages will finally be saved, one contradicts Scripture. For in this case one must further assume that there are conversions after death, inasmuch as many Jews have died in unbelief. However, there are no conversions after death, and never will be. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but **after this the Judgment,**" Hebr. 9, 27. If one assumes that all Jews will finally be saved, one must also assume that God's hardening of the human heart is not final; and that is a false assumption. Cf. Rom. 9, 18-22; John 12, 39-40. But God has hardened Israel in part. Rom. 11, 7-10.25. Since, however, Scripture does not contradict itself, it follows that the whole Jewish nation will not be saved, and therefore that St. Paul does not refer to it in the words: "**All Israel** shall be saved."

The second alternative is that St. Paul promises the salvation of all **spiritual** Israel, that is, of all Jews who have believed, who now believe, and who will believe in Jesus, until death. In other words, the salvation of "Israel" in God's promise is the salvation of the **elect** Jews. Of course, St. Paul is not concerned so much with **promising** the salvation of spiritual Israel. Rom. 9-11 is rather a passage in which the Apostle shows that God is **keeping** His unconditional promise to save "Israel."

Israel according to the American Lutheran... Church

The American Lutheran Church "avoids" both aforesaid alternatives by choosing a third "alternative." She asks toleration for a teaching which refers "all Israel" to Israel according to the **flesh**, and still does not teach that **all** Jews will be saved. She tolerates the doctrine that **most of those Jews** will be saved, **who are living on earth during some future period of time.** To her, then, "all Israel" is neither all Israel according to the flesh nor all spiritual Israel. For, obviously, all the Jews of a certain period of time are neither all Israel according to the flesh nor all spir-

itual Israel. Therefore, we should not encourage the American Lutheran Church in tolerating this doctrine in her midst. For this doctrine of the general conversion of the Jew in the future is an evident perversion of Scripture. Also for this reason Synod ought to rescind the Union Articles of 1938.

Rom. 11, 25-26

Up to this point we have not discussed the meaning of Rom. 11, 25-26 to which the A.L.C. Declaration refers. Rom. 11, 26-27 reads: "I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part is happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away *ungodliness* from Jacob: *for this is My covenant with them, when I shall take away their sins.*"

In this passage St. Paul reveals a mystery or something which we would not know if God had not revealed it to us. The mystery is this, that blindness (literally, hardness or obduracy) in part is happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. Were this fact not revealed to us, we might become wise in our own conceits, and think that because the Jewish nation rejected and crucified its Christ, total hardness has come upon it. But now we know that only partial hardness has come upon the Jewish nation until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.***

The Israel which is partially hardened is not of course spiritual Israel. To say that spiritual Israel is hardened, even in part, is a self-contradiction. No, Israel according to the **flesh** or the Jewish nation is partially hardened.**** The Apostle considers the Jewish nation as a **unit**, and says of this unit that it is partially hardened. This means, if the Jewish nation be considered as so many individuals, that some of them are hardened, while others are not hardened. In other words, all Jews are never hardened until the fulness of the Gentiles has entered. This, then, is the mystery, that so long as the fulness of the Gentiles has not entered, there will always be some Jews who are not hardened.

*** We shall see later that "the fulness of the Gentiles" is all the elect Gentiles or all those Gentiles who will finally be saved.

**** If anyone object that we "arbitrarily" regard the "Israel" of verse 25 as Israel after the flesh, but the "Israel" of verse 26 as Spiritual Israel, we refer him to John 8, 37-39 where Jesus both admits and denies that the same Jews are descendants of Abraham, that is Israelites.

Who are these unhardened Jews? They are not Jews who have already come to faith. It is self-evident that such Jews are not hardened. The unhardened Jews to whom the Apostle refers here are unbelieving Jews. That partially hardened Israel of Rom. 11, 25 consists of unbelieving Jews. But are not all unbelievers hardened? To be sure; they have hardened themselves. But not all of them have been hardened by **God**; and that is the point here. Not all unbelieving Jews are hardened by God.***** For some unbelieving Jews salvation is no longer possible because God has hardened them; but for other unbelieving Jews salvation is still possible because God has not hardened them. And this continues to be the situation among the Jews until the fulness of the Gentiles has entered. Salvation will be possible for some unbelieving Jews until that time. This is the mystery, the thing which we would not know without divine revelation.

What will happen to Israel **after** the fulness of the Gentiles has entered, St. Paul does not say or even imply, as Millennialists seem to think. The word "until" in verse 25 does not imply that the Jewish nation will enter another state after the fulness of the Gentiles has entered.***** It does not imply either that the Jewish nation will no longer be hardened at all (God's judgment of obduration is final), or that the Jewish nation will be entirely hardened, after the fulness of the Gentiles has entered. With what St. Paul says in Rom. 11, 25 he describes the condition of the Jewish nation **only during** the time when the fulness of the Gentiles is entering. During all this time, or, until the **fulness** of the Gentiles has entered, the Jewish nation is partially hardened. "And so (in this way, thus) all Israel will be saved," namely, the Israel which God has unconditionally promised to save.

Of course the "Israel" of promise will not

***** It should again be noted that salvation is forever impossible for those whom God has hardened. His hardening of the human heart or judgment of obduration is final. How foolish is, then, the notion that all Israel according to the flesh will finally be saved! To save those who are under the divine judgment of obduration is a self-contradiction.

***** If "until" implied an eventual change, Scripture would express some peculiar ideas. Cf. Acts 7, 17, 18: "... The people (of Israel) grew and multiplied, till another king arose, which knew not Joseph." If "till" or "until" (The Greek word is the same) implied an eventual change, then Acts 7, 17, 18 would imply that after that other king arose, Israel ceased to grow and multiply. But exactly the opposite is the case. See Ex. 1, 12, 18, 20. Apply the same line of thought to 1 Cor. 15, 25: "For He (Christ) must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet." Those who find an eventual change implied in the word "until" virtually change the content, substituting "And then all Israel shall be saved" for the real words, "And so all Israel shall be saved." But "then" has a meaning entirely different from "So."

all be saved during the period described in verse 25. For some Jews have been saved during the past, and some are now being saved. But up to the present time **all** "Israel" has not yet been saved. It will **all** be saved by the time the fulness of the Gentiles has entered. All "Israel" will be saved in this way, that as in the past and at present (Rom. 11, 2-5), so also in the future (the mystery of Rom. 11, 25), the Jewish nation is not completely hardened. A remnant of that nation can still be saved, and will be saved (Rom. 9, 27-28) until the fulness of the Gentiles has entered, and in this way **all** "Israel" will certainly be saved, as indeed God has promised.

Indeed, if all "Israel" is to be saved at all, it must have been saved when the fulness of the Gentiles has entered. For after that there will be no time to save anyone. "Until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in" is equivalent to "until the Last Day." Why? The fulness of the Gentiles is naturally not all Gentiles according to the flesh; for they will not all "come in" to the Christian Church. The fulness of the Gentiles is all those Gentiles who will be saved. But, now, Gentiles will be saved as long as this earth exists. For the Gospel which always bears such fruit (Is. 55, 10-11; Matt. 13, 3-43) will be preached to all nations until the end of the world (Matt. 24, 14; Rev. 14, 6-7). As soon, then, as the fulness of the Gentiles has come in, the world will be destroyed, and time will be no more. But until that time "blindness in **part** is happened to Israel," and so some Jews will always be saved until, finally, all "Israel" is saved. To be sure, "Israel" will not be large when compared with Israel. It will only be a remnant of Israel. But God never promised unconditionally to save more than a remnant of the Jews. "Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, **a remnant shall be saved.**" Rom. 9, 27.

The Apostle substantiates the fact that all Israel will be saved, with a quotation from the Old Testament, in which the Deliverer is promised who will turn away ungodliness from Jacob (Israel) when God will take away their sins. This Deliverer is our Lord Jesus Christ. When He came to take away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, He also turned away ungodliness from Israel; that is, He converted and saved Israel. The conversion of Israel is, therefore, not a still wholly future event, but something which has already been happening ever since the first coming of Christ.

Those who place the conversion of Israel

in the future are forced to consider the coming of Christ which is described in verse 26 to be an imaginary second coming of Christ before the Last Day. For the conversion of Israel begins with the coming of the Deliverer. But the discussion of that fictitious coming of Christ before the Last Day (for a "millennial reign") is something by itself, requiring its own time and place.

—D. L. Pfeiffer.

⊙ A Lay Member Of Our Church Writes President Behnken Regarding The "Cresset"

Dr. J. W. Behnken, President,
Ev. Lutheran Synod of Missouri,
Oak Park, Illinois.

Re: The Cresset

Dear Dr. Behnken:

For years I have watched the progress the Communists have made in our country, have watched them worm their way into our organizations, even into our churches. Perhaps I entertained a Pharisaical smugness for I felt that our conservative Lutheran Church would never succumb to this influence, but recently I have seen several copies of the **Cresset**, and I find to my great sorrow that the dread cancer, Communism, has spread into our church also.

Incorporated in the Communists' program of overthrow of existing governments are these three chief aims:—1, Abolition of private property; 2, Destruction of our family institution; 3, Destruction of religion. Read from the official Communist book what they say about religion:

"If we analyze these ideas and try to understand the origin of religion and why it is so strongly supported by the bourgeoisie, it will become clear that the real significance of religion is that it is a poison which is still being instilled into the people. It will also become clear why the party of the communists is a strong antagonist of religion. . . There is a poison called opium; when that is smoked, sweet visions appear; you feel as if you were in paradise. But its action tells on the health of the smoker. His health is gradually ruined, and little by

little he becomes a meek idiot. The same applies to religion."

The Federal Council of Churches has been chief in promoting the work of the Communists in the churches; it has sponsored the affiliations between Protestant, Jewish and Catholic churches; it is accomplishing its purpose—it has started a series of compromises which will eventually mean the destruction of religion. When we compromise and join the Modernists in religion, we are meeting on common ground, the Reform Jews who have also compromised and left their Orthodox Jewish faith. The whole movement has been instigated by God-haters, the Communists, who are much closer to dominating the world than Hitler ever will be. We listen and fall for their talk about the Kingdom of Heaven on earth and the universal brotherhood of man,—noble aims, to be sure; but, the Bible tells us that God's Kingdom is not of this earth. If we would open our eyes and not only our ears to their babble, we would see how diametrically opposite are their deeds from their words; how they ushered in the "New Order" in Russia by murdering millions of people; how other millions starved to death, leaving hordes of homeless children to rove the streets; we would see a country without God, because God is not allowed there. We would also see that they are striving IN THE NAME OF NATIONAL DEFENSE, to fasten their tentacles on our own country. We have been administered concentrated doses of education in "tolerance." We have learned our lesson so well that we are tolerating the destruction of our U. S. Constitution and our religion—in short, the destruction of all the liberties our forefathers fought and died for. We have forgotten that "the price of liberty is eternal vigilance." So in the church—if the guardians of our Faith, the ministers of the Gospel, do not defend the Faith, to whom shall we turn?

Will you review the August issue of the **Cresset** with me? It surpasses Luce's **Life**, **Times**, and **Fortune** magazines in its propaganda for Communism and war. Note the "atrocities" stories on page 5, strangely reminiscent of propaganda given us during the last war. On page 7 I find this sentence:—"What is more, it is acts such as these which make it inescapable necessary for government to take over the control of an ever increasing number of areas in American life." What is this if it is not propaganda for abolition of private property? The rest of page 7 is devoted to criticism of Russia—resembling the "cover-up" technic regularly employed by Communists.

* This letter will be interesting towards showing what an impression the **Cresset** makes on lay-people within our church who are somewhat informed with regard to Socialism and its propaganda. Mrs. Goddard is a member of a Missouri Synod congregation in Glenn Ellyn, Ill.—Editor.

Page 19—"Back to Medievalism"—This is a discussion of several books written by Jacques Maritain of France, and later a professor in Toronto, Canada. A little investigation shows him to be one of the most extreme leftists in the Catholic Church, and a man who, strangely enough, concerns himself much more over the persecution of a few Jews in Germany than over millions of Catholics in Russia. He also lectures about the "New Order" when he comes to the States. All in all, I can't see why the political-economical and religious views of a Catholic professor should be of such great concern to us Lutherans.

Page 47—"The Literary Scene"—Here we have reviews of books, most of which are by refugees and other radical writers. Some of the writings of Thomas Mann have been condemned in a Catholic magazine as filthy and obscene. He is just one more foreigner who has come here to tell us Americans how to run our country. He says concerning Russia: "... it constitutes a reinforcement of democracy." He also thinks we should change our form of government. He says: "A reform is necessary which will make of it something very different from the freedom that existed and could exist in the times of our fathers and forefathers, the epoch of bourgeois liberalism. . . . The reform I have in mind must be a social reform, a reform in the social sense. . . . Moreover, this social reform must aim at spiritual as well as economic freedom." (From "The Coming Victory of Democracy.")

The one book of fiction reviewed "Junior Miss" may or may not be propaganda; however, it is mentioned as a Book-of-the-Month-Club book. In the Congressional Record of July 17th you will find a charge brought out by Rep. Paul Shafer of Michigan that this book is just one more propaganda medium. As an extra dividend to its members 200,000 copies of Streit's "Union Now" are being distributed free.

Page 59—"A Survey of Books"—This section contains the names of the reddest of the reds—from Dorothy Thompson down.

Page 63—"Check List of Books Reviewed" (From Feb. to July 1941). Here we find a regular rogues' gallery of un-American, radical and pro-war writers, those who are working through the churches, the schools, the administration, and through mere fiction. We see here even the name of the Englishman, Bertrand Russell, teacher of sex immorality and atheism. He was dismissed from Cambridge University and prevented from taking a post in one of our eastern schools, but is

still free to write and expound his immoral philosophies on American lecture platforms. Here is the name of Harold Rugg, who has been exposed as the writer of subversive textbooks for our schools. Rugg has written: "It is Utopian to expect to achieve revolutionary goals without using revolutionary means. . . . Schools as far as possible must be run as part of the propaganda agency." (See **Scribner's Commentator**, Nov., 1941.) Here, too, is the extreme radical Hewlett Johnson on "The Soviet Power,"—and Harold Ickes himself. The fact that books are classified as "Recommended—with reservations" or "Not recommended" does not explain why they should be honored with a review in a Lutheran Church organ.

Page 66—MAGAZINES—"Fortune Magazine" is a Luce publication. Mr. Henry Luce, educated in England, is one of the most rabid war interventionists in the country.

Page 68—MOTION PICTURES—"Citizen Kane"—One of the outstanding propaganda pictures. "The Bride Came C. O. D."—**Cresset** does not recommend this picture and classifies it as "racy" and on the "shady side." Then, why is it given almost a page of review in a church paper? It looks like part of the Communist program of lowering moral standards, first step towards breaking down our family institution.

* * * *

If some church leaders have been "beguiled with enticing words" and have accepted the social gospel of Marx, why are they not honest enough to tell us, instead of joining the Communists in forcing their doctrine upon us and our children by subtle, underhanded methods? Many people are the unwitting tools of the Communists, for they blindly follow the leader and don't apply their own reason to questions at hand; some may question a point, but in this age where tolerance is everything, they would rather not ask the question than appear to be narrow-minded. For this reason a small minority can wreck a whole organization before the plot is discovered—if only the members are tolerant enough.

It is time we question some of the activities in our church. . . .

This letter is not written to unduly criticize our church. I truly believe that our religious liberty is at stake unless there are more pastors who will stand up and defend the Faith. Surely a magazine like the **Cresset** has no place in our church or in our country.

Sincerely,

Mrs. E. G. Goddard,

⊗ Something We Must Constantly Guard Against

How often history shows us that men of exceptional ability and will, in the end, become a detriment to the cause they represent. They start out as servants of a cause. They end by making the cause serve them.—R. E. Golladay, *The Son of God Rides On*, p. 28.

—P. H. B.

⊗ A Chronological Study Of The Prayer-Fellowship Question In The Present Union Movement

Reflections on One of the Questions That Were before the Ft. Wayne Convention of the Missouri Synod

One of the points on which both the Missouri Synod and the A. L. C. admit that there is disagreement between them, is the prayer-fellowship question. Since this question will no doubt loom high in future discussions within the Missouri Synod and in Inter-Synodical Conferences, it may be helpful for such discussions, to consider, in chronological order, certain developments which have taken place since the time it was made known by our Union Committee that such disagreement existed.

Dec. 8, 1939: The Missouri Synod Committee on Lutheran Union reported in a letter to the clergy of the Missouri Synod as follows: "Another point advanced by the American Lutheran Commissioners to illustrate that they do not regard acceptance of the Brief Statement to imply endorsement of every detail in it, had to do with the question of unionism. We quote: 'With Sec. 28 of the Brief Statement we, of course, confess our adherence to the Galesburg Rule, although we find ourselves unable to see that all of the Scripture-passages referred to here or otherwise quoted are applicable as proofs for this rule. Likewise, with the same section we reject all unionism but call attention to the fact that we consider prayer-fellowship wider than church-fellowship and that therefore in certain cases we may occasionally pray privately with some one with whom we are not in church-fellowship.' Our reply was: 'Generally speaking, prayer-fellowship involves church-fellowship. There may be cases, however, where the question whether common prayer means fellowship belongs to the field of casuistry.' We did not have time to enter fully upon the much-debated subject of prayer-

fellowship. The American Lutheran Church, commissioners as well as we realize that here there is a difference, pertaining not so much (if at all) to the principles involved as to the application to be made of these principles. Patient and thorough discussion is required in order that unity in this sphere, too, may be attained. We shall, of course, continue to consider this topic with the American Lutheran Church commissioners." (P. 8 of letter of Committee on Lutheran Union to the Clergy of the Mo. Synod.)

Feb. 1940: In a pamphlet entitled "In the Interest of Lutheran Unity" Dr. M. Reu of the A. L. C., on page 46, writes as follows: I cannot find any Bible-texts which forbid prayer-fellowship with non-Lutherans who sincerely believe in Christ as the God-man and their only Savior and pray with me to the Father in Christ's holy name, and still less any text which forbids such prayer fellowship with Lutherans who do not agree with me in all points of doctrine. The Bible texts commonly adduced to fortify this position can be forced to carry this meaning only when they are generalized in wholly unjustified fashion. The glory of the Missouri Synod has been in strict adherence to the Word of God; why does it, by unwarranted generalizations, go beyond the Word of God?"

June 1940: The American Lutheran stated editorially: "Apparently the problem which perplexes Prof. Fendt (A. L. C.) and leaders in other Lutheran bodies most deeply is the question of prayer-fellowship. We can only say that there is a difference of opinion in the Missouri Synod on this question." (*American Lutheran*, Vol. XXIII., No. 6., p. 4.)

Aug. 1940: The Synodical Conference which met in Chicago, Ill., Aug. 1-6, 1940, engaged in a discussion of the prayer-fellowship question which resulted in the inclusion of the word "prayer-fellowship" in the following resolution which was adopted: "That we ask the Missouri Synod not to enter into fellowship (prayer—, altar—, pulpit-fellowship) with the American Lutheran Church until matters now objected to by members of the Synodical Conference have been clarified and until the whole matter has once more been presented to another meeting of the Synodical Conference, a policy which has already been laid down by the Missouri Synod itself in the above reference." (Syn. Conf. Report, 1940, p. 89.)

Sept. 3, 1940: The editors of the *Lutheran Witness* stated: "Leaders of the A. L. C. believe that prayer is under some circumstances

permissible with those agreeing with us in the essentials of Christianity though not throughout in confessional harmony. From this view we dissent. It is clear that the concept of fellowship must be clarified before we can enter into fraternal relations with the A. L. C." (P. 307.)

Oct. 1940: In a statement setting forth to the A. L. C. the factors preventing the establishment of fellowship between the two bodies, the Missouri Synod Committee on Lutheran Union, among other things, stated: "It ought to be mentioned, too, that with respect to prayer-fellowship it seems that in the A. L. C. a more liberal practice is followed than that which obtains in the Missouri Synod. We wish to state our firm conviction that ordinarily prayer-fellowship involves church-fellowship." (C. T. M., Vol. XI, p. 930.)

In answer to this the A. L. C., in convention assembled at Detroit, Oct. 10-17, stated officially: "Referring to prayer-fellowship, we are still convinced that prayer-fellowship is wider than church-fellowship, but we do not consider this difference as church-divisive and believe in the course of time it will be overcome completely." (C. T. M. Vol. XI, p. 933.)

May 1941: The **Confessional Lutheran** in treating the passage Rom. 16, 17 as it applies to the prayer-fellowship question stated: "This passage clearly commands us to avoid joint worship with those who hold doctrines which diverge from the prophetic and apostolic writings. This passage does not in any way restrict itself to public worship, but includes all forms of worship (whether public or private.) And prayer certainly is an act of worship as our own Synodical Catechism clearly states." (C. L., Vol. II, p. 52.) The **Confessional Lutheran** furthermore quoted from the **Concordia Cyclopedia** which declares: "There is one rule which permits the Christian conscience to be sure of divine approval: join in prayer and worship only with those who are united with us by a common faith and profession." C. L., Vol. II, p. 53.

June 1941. The Convention Services of the **Lutheran Witness**, reporting the Delegate Synod at Fort Wayne, announced the adoption of the following paragraph by the Synod: "In the meantime, it be understood that no pulpit-altar- or prayer-fellowship has been established between us and the American Lutheran Church; and until such fellowship has been officially declared by the Synods concerned, no action is to be taken by any of our pastors or congregations which ignores the fact that we are not yet united." Here-

upon follows the report of the discussion which preceded the adoption of this paragraph—"The question was raised whether this would forbid opening Inter-Synodical Conferences such as were held between the Missouri Synod and the American Lutheran Church with prayer. Prayer-fellowship still remains a much discussed problem as was indicated by the fact that at least 12 men were of divided opinion on the floor of Synod. Dr. Fritz requested that we do not discuss this any further, as it calls for more time than is available to us and is irrelevant. 'The Committee itself has not considered this at all in its meeting.' President Behnken then said, 'This question should be discussed by local conferences throughout the entire triennium.' Dr. Graebner stated, 'Our Synod is in a new position since it has for the first time adopted a joint statement of doctrine with a synod which had once differed from us. There is even now no perfect doctrinal agreement, yet we have an official basis for future fellowship.* Naturally the question of joint prayers in Inter-Synodical Conferences has not found all of us in agreement. But the section before us says nothing either for or against such joint prayer and can safely be adopted.' Dr. O. Geiseman added: 'This subject of prayer-fellowship in Inter-Synodical Conferences should not at this time be forced to a final decision.' President J. C. Meyer said: 'I would like to warn the convention that if it rejects this paragraph, it also rejects our stand as to pulpit- and altar-fellowship.' The section was then unanimously adopted."

July 1941: A Pastor of the American Lutheran Church writes in the **Journal of Theology**: "While we emphasize emphatically the propriety of joint prayer with representatives of Lutheran bodies which as yet are not in pulpit- and altar-fellowship with us, brotherly charity may advise even here that we forego that blessed privilege of common prayer if such representatives from the other camp would see in this a violation of conscience. In this case they would be the weaker brethren though they may be highranking leaders in their respective communions, their weakness being the result of a life-long train-

* Dr. Graebner was, of course, entirely mistaken when he stated: "Our Synod is in a new position since it has for the first time adopted a joint statement of doctrine with a synod which had once differed from us." The Missouri Synod and the American Lutheran Church never adopted any joint statement of doctrine. This was one of the things which were made very clear on the floor of the Ft. Wayne convention. Dr. Graebner was wholly right when he stated: "There is even now no perfect doctrinal agreement" between the Missouri Synod and the American Lutheran Church. The **Confessional Lutheran** will, in a future issue, discuss this question in detail.—P. H. B.

ing. In situations like this, however, it becomes imperative for us to seek to enlighten the opposing brethren, especially since foregoing our liberty in such cases may cause justifiable offense in the other direction, namely among our own brethren and it will certainly prevent us from attaining that very unity we seek to accomplish. It may even be our duty to omit such meetings altogether when it becomes apparent that our efforts are futile, and that the refusal of prayer-fellowship is no longer due to weakness." (*Journal of Theology of the American Lutheran Conference*, July 1941, p. 585.)

Aug. 1941: Dr. Geiseman in his column in the American Lutheran speaks of prayer-fellowship as a subject "on which the understanding and viewpoint of a very large number of our pastors has changed appreciably during recent years as a result of careful Bible Study and conference discussions." *A. L.*, Vol. XXIV., No. 8., p. 5.

These excerpts will serve to emphasize (to those who are not wholly indifferent to the matter) the very serious situation which prevails among us in the important question of prayer-fellowship. Not only is there disagreement between the official positions of the A.

L. C. and the Missouri Synod on the question but it is openly admitted that there is a lack of agreement among the pastors of the Missouri Synod on this point. To try to hide, minimize, overlook, or pass by this problem without reaching a settlement on the basis of God's Word, is the sheerest folly. If we permit this diversity of opinion to go on without a settlement we will fall into the same class with the American Lutheran Conference where pastors are permitted to hold diverse opinions without official censure or discipline. It is necessary that we also speak the same words and have the same mind and the same judgment also with regard to this question of prayer-fellowship. Also here we are to remember the warning about the growth of the small leaven. As stated by the venerable President of Synod, this is a question which should be discussed by Conferences during the entire triennium.

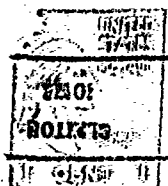
—C. M. G.

NOTE:—This October issue of the *Confessional Lutheran* has been unduly delayed by no fault of ours, due to changes in the printshop in which the presswork on it is done.

—P. H. B.

Dr. L. Fuerbringer 12-2
801 De Mun Ave.
St. Louis, Mo.

Sec. 562, P. L. & R.



THE CONFESSIONAL LUTHERAN

Published In The Interest Of Ecumenical Lutheranism

MOTTO: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."--1 Cor. 1, 10.

REV. PAUL H. BURGDORF
Editor

REV. J. BUENGER
Assistant Editor

REV. C. M. GULLERUD
Contributing Editor

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Vol. II

NOVEMBER, 1941

No. 11

IN THIS ISSUE:--Shall Negotiations with the A. L. C. Now be Continued? -- Was Walther a Fundamentalist? -- The Position of the A. L. C. with Regard to the Holy

Scriptures -- The Question of the Conversion of the Jews -- "Union with Missouri" -- Dr. Reu's Complaint -- Criticism of the "Cresset" -- For the Record.

● Shall Negotiations With The American Lutheran Church Now Be Continued?

Dr. M. Reu, most influential leader in the American Lutheran Church, editor of its theological journal, **Kirchliche Zeitschrift**, and prominent member of that church body's union committee has made it clear that our answer to the question in the caption of this article ought to be "NO"! Under the title "Must the Negotiations with Missouri Now Cease?" Dr. Reu writes a lengthy article in the October issue of the **Kirchliche Zeitschrift** in which he purposes to show that in spite of things which have occurred to make further negotiations more difficult, negotiations should yet be continued. In this article Dr. Reu gives advance notice that if anyone is entertaining the hope that by the formulation of a new document the A. L. C. will in any way amend its position as presented in its "Declaration" such a one is clinging to a hope which is futile and useless from the start. He states that in its "Declaration" the A. L. C. has gone as far as its conscience will permit and that it will go no step further. Illustrating this determination more concretely he says that as for the four points termed "non-fundamental doctrines" in the St. Louis Reso-

lutions of 1938, there is no hope that the A. L. C. will recognize Missouri's teaching on them as being the only correct one to the exclusion of all others. Those who have such hopes are deceiving themselves, he says. He goes further, in saying that those likewise err who think that although there is no agreement on these points now, yet acceptance of Missouri's teaching on them must ultimately come. Willingness to study these points is expressed, but if the goal of this study is to be acknowledgment of Missouri's teaching of these Bible passages as being the only right one, then he says it were better that such study be not entered upon. In the face of these bald assertions how can any committee of the Missouri Synod ever hope to fulfill the mandate of the Fort Wayne Convention "that also in reference to these teachings we endeavor to establish full agreement"? When this very prominent member of the A. L. C. Union Committee states in an official publication of the A. L. C. that this church will not amend anything it has stated in its Declaration, how can any committee of Missouri enter into negotiations with it and hope to fulfill Resolution 8c adopted at Fort Wayne, which reads as follows: "In preparing this one document our Committee prayerfully and carefully consider all the misgivings and objections that have been expres-

sed in memorials presented to this convention or otherwise; and that this one document be so clearly written that there can be no misunderstanding in reference to the meaning which the words are to convey." Such statements as those referred to, coming from one who has been most prominently associated with the A. L. C.'s dealings in the Union matter simply close the door to further negotiations, unless we are ready to ignore what everyone ought clearly to see by this time, namely, that these people are not coming to us to ask us for a reason for the hope that is in us, but are merely interested in reaching a certain goal—pulpit, altar, and prayer-fellowship with Missouri without doctrinal unity.

Fort Wayne Resolution No. 7, on the Union matter reads: "That our sister Synods in the Synodical Conference be asked to send their representatives to the joint meetings of this Committee." In his article, Dr. Reu frowns on this and says that while the A. L. C. possibly had good reasons for opposing an invitation to have the sister synods of Missouri take part in past negotiations, there are still stronger reasons why it will be difficult to agree to such an invitation now. Concerning this invitation, which Missouri extends to her sister synods, Dr. Reu says: "Here truly is a point which makes the continuation of negotiations difficult." The only explanation he has to give for the passage of Resolution 7 is that the majority at Fort Wayne had not read or sufficiently considered the expressions of the Norwegian Synod and the Wisconsin Synod. For, he says, if they had, they would scarcely have left this point in the report unchanged. Here again we note that an examination and testing of the doctrinal position of the A. L. C. is not very welcome. The fact that the Norwegian Synod and the Wisconsin Synod have tested their doctrinal position and found it wanting, are the reasons, no doubt, why they are by the A. L. C. considered so undesirable as participants in the union negotiations. Here again it should be clear that the A. L. C. is not so much interested in doctrinal discussions as in reaching a certain goal—namely, unionistic pulpit, altar, and prayer-fellowship with Missouri.

Under the circumstances can Missouri continue to defend her negotiations with the A. L. C. on the basis of I Peter 3, 15, "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you"? Indeed, it is more clear than ever that Missouri has another task to perform, and that is to tell the American Lutheran Church that further negotiations are out of the question as things now stand.

Missouri now has the plain Scriptural d of applying such passages as Romans 16, ^{city} 17 to the situation in hand.

—C. M. G.

Was Walther A "Fundamentalist", ? A Discussion of a Most Important Question In Connection with the Ft. Wayne Resolutions of the Missouri Synod

Was Doctor Walther a "Fundamentalist"—that is to say, was he one of those liberalist spirits who insist that it is necessary to be agreed only in so-called "fundamental" doctrines, and who regard as a schismatic every one who demands unity in "non-fundamentals" also?

It may seem absurd even to raise such question as has been suggested here. Yet that question has been raised. And it has been raised by no one less than the editor of the *Lutheran Witness*, official publication of the Missouri Synod.

In its issue of Aug. 6, 1940, the *Lutheran Witness* says that on page 119 of the volume **Walther and the Church** (C.P.H., 1938) "Dr. Walther defines as 'schismatic communions' (churches keeping up an unjustified division) those which destroy the unity of the Church on account of 'non-fundamental errors or personalities or ceremonies or wicked life'."

Now, it is in the first place not true that you will find, on page 119 of the volume referred to, the statement which the *Lutheran Witness* credits to it. The editors of the *Lutheran Witness* did not cite the statement which is found on the given page of the volume that has been named, as we shall see anon.

Before going into this matter any further, however, we would ask our readers to note for the present that if the statement of the *Lutheran Witness* were correct, it would — **horribile dictu** — make a "Fundamentalist" of Dr. Walther! If Walther had really taught what the *Lutheran Witness* mistakenly charges him with having taught, Walther would not have been a true Christian teacher. Thank God, Walther was far from holding the false position mistakenly attributed to him. In accordance with the Eighth Commandment and the Law of Love it is our Christian obligation to defend Walther's fair name (Mt. 5, 19) against such charges. (Cp. e.g. Prov. 31, 8f.) This is true even though the charge made against Dr. Walther was, no doubt, not made

out of malice, but was rather due to a complete misunderstanding of Walther's position, though stated by him in such simple, honest Saxon that it should seem difficult to misunderstand him at all. This is true all the more because of the far-reaching implications of the erroneous view attributed to Dr. Walther by the **Lutheran Witness**, and the unfortunate use which this journal has made of such implications in the interest of a liberal misinterpretation of the St. Louis Union Resolutions of 1938 and the historical position of the Missouri Synod.

The **Lutheran Witness** itself seems to have sensed that there was something wrong about its use of Walther. For, after a bit of confused and confusing discussion of the American Lutheran Church's Sandusky Resolutions, it restricted its use of the statement which it had mistakenly credited to Dr. Walther to just certain undefined "non-fundamentals," saying: "**These** non-fundamentals (which have been under discussion)* are indeed of a nature that no one can treat a difference regarding them as divisive without becoming what Dr. Walther in his thesis calls 'schismatic or separatistic'." (August 6, 1940, p. 275).

Now, the **Lutheran Witness** cannot thus restrict its use of the statement it has mistakenly credited to Dr. Walther. For if Walther really "defines as 'schismatic communions' (churches keeping up an unjustified division) those which destroy the unity of the Church on account of 'non-fundamental' errors," then, so far as Walther is concerned, non-fundamentals in general, all non-fundamentals, "are indeed of a nature that no one can treat a difference regarding them as divisive without becoming what Dr. Walther in his thesis calls 'schismatic or separatistic'." In other words, Walther would have been a "Fundamentalist."

But, thank God, as already stated, Walther fortunately never was guilty of the statement which is mistakenly credited to him by the **Lutheran Witness**. The statement which the **Lutheran Witness** says is to be found on page 119 of the volume, **Walther and the Church**, will as already stated, not be found there. One will rather find there this wholly correct, orthodox, Scriptural statement: "Communities destroying the unity of the Church **for** non-fundamental errors or personalities or wicked life, according to God's Word are schismatic or separatistic communities." (Our emphasis.)

That is rather clear language. The **Lutheran Witness** does not cite that clear language. It substitutes, instead, its own language—language which makes possible unwarranted support of its own mistaken view regarding "non-fundamentals." Its statement, to cite it again, "defines as 'schismatic communions' churches keeping up an unjustified division) those which destroy the unity of the Church **on account of** 'non-fundamental' errors." (Our emphasis.) Now, it certainly makes a great deal of difference whether one (correctly) says that anyone who dissolves a marriage relation **for** an improper affair is an adulterer; or whether one (mistakenly) says that anyone who dissolves a marriage relation **on account of** an improper affair, viz. on the part of the other party to the marriage, is an adulterer—a difference which the **Lutheran Witness** does not seem to have discerned. Even so, the language of Dr. Walther is clearer still. For we must still point out that the translation of Walther's thesis which Dr. Dallmann supplied in the volume, **Walther and the Church**, and which we have had occasion to refer to, does not render precisely Walther's statement as found in the original German, although it does reproduce its sense correctly. Walther's statement rendered exactly, as it originally appeared, in his classic monogram, **The Ev. Luth. Church the True Visible Church of God Upon Earth**, reads: "Communities which destroy the unity of the Church through errors not subversive of the foundation of faith, or because of ceremonies, or life, represent divisions (schismatic bodies), or separatistic communities." (P. 35. Our emphasis.)**

No, Walther was not a "Fundamentalist." He simply believed, as we do, and as does every true confessional Lutheran, that **whoever destroys the unity of the Church THROUGH an error not subversive of the foundation of faith is a schismatic**—as distinguished from sectarians or heretics, who destroy the unity of the Church through fundamental errors. On the basis of I Cor. 11, 18f, Walther made a distinction between these two, as did other Lutheran theologians before him.*** But as for the question of fellowship, he rightly taught in all of his work that an orthodox church can fellowship neither the one nor the other. He believed and taught, throughout his long career, what the Missouri Synod still believes and teaches

** We are not calling attention to this difference in order to criticize Dr. Dallmann's rendering of Walther, but rather to show how carefully and precisely Walther spoke, making it extremely difficult if not impossible to misunderstand him.

*** This subject has been discussed somewhat more fully in the July issue of the **Confessional Lutheran**.

* The **Lutheran Witness** never made clear just exactly which "non-fundamentals" were under discussion.

according to its Ft. Wayne Resolutions of 1941, which stipulate that "it be understood that the term 'non-fundamental doctrines' which has been used should not be made to convey the idea that anything clearly revealed in Scripture, although not absolutely necessary for salvation, may be denied." (**General Proceedings, 1941, p. 302.**) What the Ft. Wayne Resolutions ask for could hardly be made any clearer than Walther made it.

Applying the simple truth which has been set forth here more particularly to the situation that confronts us in the present Lutheran Union Movement, we must say that if the Missouri Synod were to sacrifice Scriptural truth and destroy the unity of the Church—and more particularly that of the Synodical Conference—through or for such "non-fundamental" millennialistic errors as those for which the American Lutheran Church demands tolerance (concerning the conversion of the Jews, the question of the resurrection of the martyrs, Antichrist, and a future "millennial reign of Christ"), then **the Missouri Synod would become what Walther rightly calls a schismatic communion.**

P. H. B.

● The Position Of The American Lutheran Church With Regard To The Holy Scriptures

By Rev. Geo. O. Lillegard

(Continued)

The Clearness of Scripture

It is an essential part of faith in Scripture as the divinely inspired Word of God that we accept and believe the words as they stand without trying to harmonize them with our own reason or with human science and philosophy, neither adding thereto, nor subtracting therefrom by the interpretations and explanations of popes, theologians and church councils. God has made His words so clear that no mere man can make them more clear and plain than they already are. (Cf. Ps. 119, 105, etc.) All departures from the saving truth are due, not to any unclearness or uncertainty in Scripture itself, but to the stubborn prejudices and wilful blindness that too often are found even in those who profess to believe in God. Just as sins against the Law of God are due to the old Adam which regenerated persons also have, not to any indefiniteness or unclearness in the commandments themselves, so the heresies and doctrinal errors which disturb the Christian

Church are due to the mental, moral, and spiritual weaknesses of Christians, not to any lack of clearness or simplicity in the doctrinal statements of the Bible. Thus nothing could be more clear and simple than, for example, the words of Christ in the institution of the Lord's Supper, or the words of Moses concerning the time required for the work of creation. Yet Christians have disagreed seriously on the meaning of those words, because they put human **interpretations**, based on reason or on science, above the Word alone.

Still we read in the essay, "What is Scripture?" by Dr. Reu, which we have been reviewing in a series of articles: "The Scriptures are clear and perspicuous **per se**; their perspicuity is the basis and presupposition for all exegetical work in the Church. **But this perspicuity must be rightly understood.** The perspicuity of Scripture is a growing thing and here John 16, 13 with its promise: 'The Spirit will lead you into all truth,' is to be applied. It is a fact that the Church did not from the very beginning understand every phase of Scripture, but during the course of history, under the guidance of God, the meaning of Scripture **becomes** ever plainer and clearer. Centuries passed and St. Paul was not understood, and Luther himself had read his Bible for years, being certainly an honest seeker after truths, and did not find the right understanding of Rom. 1, 17 with its term 'righteousness of God,' until God Himself opened his eyes. If the Church continues faithfully to ponder the Word of God, if it makes ever more complete use of all auxiliary branches of study (such as grammar, lexicography, history, etc.) and if it makes moral progress, then the Spirit will lead the Church in corresponding measure, but in His own time, into the comprehension of Scripture, often in opposition to errors that may arise from time to time." (p. 74.)

Compare with this the words of Dr. Fr. Pieper in his "Christliche Dogmatik": "God has arranged the Holy Scripture so that any error in Christian teaching is impossible **so long as we remain in simple faith on His Word.** (Cf. John 8, 31-32. I Tim. 6, 3.) Hence also Luther's constant admonition never to put an interpretation (gloss) in place of words of Scripture themselves (in place of 'the naked Scripture'). 'The Word they still shall let abide!' It is a characteristic of the Lutheran Church that it bases its doctrine not on an interpretation, not even on the interpretation of Luther, but on the Scripture words themselves; while Papists and Reformed demonstrably stand, not on the words of

Scripture itself, but on an interpretation of the Pope, or of Zwingli, Calvin, etc." (Pp. 390-1; tr. from the German by L.) Thus, the reason why Luther so long misunderstood the clear words of Rom. 1, 17, was simply that his mind had been prejudiced by the interpretations of the Catholic theologians who by their "systems of theology" and their rationalistic speculations had beclouded and perverted the plain statements of Scripture. To argue that the Spirit had not led "the Church" into a full understanding of such passages as Rom. 1, 17, until "God Himself opened his (Luther's) eyes," is to disregard the historical fact that the early Church and unnumbered individual Christians down through the centuries understood them correctly and had a full knowledge of saving truth. It is, furthermore, "svaermeri," a false "enthusiasm," to assume that "the Spirit leads men into all truth" in any other way than by means of the written Word itself, — as if it took some special revelation from on high, or some Quakerish "illumination" of the Spirit to enable a man to understand the Scriptures! The Modernist professors at the University of Chicago, under whom we studied some New Testament exegesis and History of Interpretation, insisted that no man could understand the Bible aright until he had gained a full knowledge of the historical circumstances under which it was written as well as of the grammar, lexicography, etc., of the Bible, besides imbibing the "scientific" (i. e. evolutionary) spirit. Thus they sought to undermine all faith in the Bible as God's saving Word. Dr. Pieper says in answer to such claims: "We must hold fast to this that a definite understanding of Scripture in no manner depends on an acquaintance with its secular-historical background, since the whole historical background which is necessary for a sure understanding of the meaning of Scripture is given in Scripture itself." (p. 442.) But Dr. Reu follows the Modernist principles, instead of refuting them, and at the same time states the orthodox principles, with the result that he also undermines faith in the Bible as the clear word of God, the only light on our way.

In this connection, Dr. Reu argues that "the understanding of Scripture by the Church, and here again especially by those who have been called upon to interpret Scripture, precedes the understanding by the individual members." (p. 75.) If this is not "Romanism," then the Roman Catholic Church does not teach "Romanism" either. Dr. Reu says, indeed, that it "is not Romanism; it is only a statement of a fact, and long experience of the Church." But we deny that it is a fact,

and assert on the contrary that "the understanding of Scripture by the individual members" has as a matter of historical record preceded "the understanding of Scripture by the Church." Individuals like Athanasius had to wage bitter controversies in order to get "the Church" to accept the doctrine of the Trinity which the Bible teaches from Genesis 1 on to the end. Individuals like Luther had to live a life of unceasing warfare to get even a part of "the Church" to accept the central doctrine of justification by faith alone, which the Bible so clearly teaches throughout. Furthermore, if "the Church" has to make clear the meaning of Scripture before an individual can be sure of what it means, and if "the Church" in turn can become clear only by a gradual historical development of Bible interpretation, then it is the Church which is the real authority for faith and life, not the Bible at all. Therefore Dr. Pieper calls it "a departure from the Scripture principle" when men in any manner refer to "the Church, the doctrinal decisions of the Church (Councils, Synods), the Pope, etc." (p. 244), as authorities for what we shall believe.

That Dr. Reu really means to cast doubt on the clearness of Scripture is indicated also by his statement: "Although we do not deny that now and then a heathen soul can find the way of life by mere Bible reading without the help of any spoken word of the preacher or missionary or Christian layman, this is certainly not the rule but an exception. Therefore we Lutherans do not believe that distribution of the Bible among non-Christians is the better part of missionary work." We do not know what authority Dr. Reu has for speaking for Lutherans in general here. We for our part have had some experience in the foreign fields and are certain that by far the best part of the mission work done in heathen lands is that of Bible distribution. Most missionaries have "darkened counsel" by their stuttering efforts at "explaining" the Bible to the heathen. But if they have put the Bible into their hands in an adequate translation they have done much good. Difficulties with understanding the Bible arise for the heathen only when the Bible has not been accurately translated or when keywords of the Bible, like, e. g. God, are misrepresented by the substitution of an idol-name for the literal translation, as has been done in some editions of the Bible in China. Then, indeed, the Bible will need to be "interpreted" and "properly safeguarded by the preaching of the missionary, if it is not to be misunderstood. Otherwise it is the Bible itself which also in heathen lands is God's means of grace for the con-

version of the heathen. As Luther says: "The Scripture **without any interpretation** is the sun and **all light.**" Referring to the words of institution of the Lord's Supper as an example, Luther says: "Even if I were a Turk, a Jew or heathen, who accepted nothing of the Christian faith, but heard or read these words about the Sacrament, I would have to say: I do not indeed believe the Christian doctrine; but this I must say: If you wish to be Christians and hold to your doctrine (on the basis of the words of Scripture), then you must believe that Christ's body and blood are eaten and drunk in the bread and wine bodily." (Quoted in Pieper, p. 392-3.) Thus we know of Reformed missionaries in China who complain that their converts understand the Sacrament in what is essentially the Lutheran (the Scriptural) way! In short, the missionary's real task, as well as the faithful pastor's, is to persuade the people to study God's own Word,—study it so thoroughly that they can correct their teachers if they in any way depart from the simple teachings of that Word,—not to "explain" or "interpret" the Bible to them as if they could not understand it without such explanations. That is something that should be left to Romanists, Christian Scientists with their blasphemous "Key to Holy Scriptures," and other heretics.

It does not help matters that Dr. Reu also admits that the written Word of God, in and by itself, is a means of grace. For he adds: "In conceding this we do not take back what we formerly said about the circulation of Bibles as a sufficient means of missionary activity." (p. 77.) It is characteristic of his essay throughout that truth and error are set side by side in it; where they obviously contradict each other, it is merely asserted that they do not contradict each other, and with that assertion we are to be satisfied. The tragedy is that such muddled, contradictory teachings should now be broadcast in our own circles also, the doors having been opened wide for them by the Missouri Synod's insistence on continuing to hold conferences with those who do not agree with the clear, definite teachings of Walther, Pieper and "old Missouri." We have met with only too many evidences accordingly that brethren in the faith who should have known better have been infected by this uncertain, "yes and no," Modernistic-orthodox attitude to Scripture and Scripture doctrine. We say, therefore, with St. Paul: "This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. I have confidence in you through the Lord that ye will be none otherwise minded; but he that troubleth you shall bear his

judgment, whosoever he be." (Gal. 5, 8-10)
—**Lutheran Sentinel** (Norwegian Synod), April 12, 1941.

(To be Continued)

⊙ The Question Of The Conversion Of The Jews

By A Converted Jew

**An Interview with Mr. H. D. Rosenberg B
The Editor of the "Confessional Lutheran"**

"You are a converted Jew?"

"Yes. According to the flesh, I am a Hebrew of the Hebrews. I was born of Jewish parentage in Egypt. But, thank God, I am a Christian now. My uncle, Daniel Landsmann, by the way, was the Missouri Synod's first missionary to the Jews."

"May I ask why it is that you say, with some emphasis, that you were born a Jew according to the flesh?"

"Because to be born a Jew constitutes an inescapable distinction. As things are now, however, this distinction is racial more than anything else. For present-day Jews, for the most part, do not believe even in their own perverted religion anymore. Much less do they believe in the true, Messianic religion of their forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and of all true Israelites. (Cp. John 1, 47.)"

"Why, in the last analysis, do you think you became converted to Christ?"

"For the same reason that some Gentiles come to be converted—because I am one of God's elect, elected unto eternal life in Christ by the grace of God before the foundation of the world."

"How many Jews do you believe will be converted to Christian faith?"

"It is just as with the Gentiles—as many as are of the number of God's elect. Broadly speaking, however, the Jews had their day, in Old Testament times. These New Testament days generally speaking, constitute the time of the Gentiles of whom a comparatively few came to faith in Old Testament days. Only a comparative remnant of Jews can still be expected to come to faith. (Cp. Rom. 11, 1-7; Acts 13, 48. Lk. 21, 24.)"

"How long do you think the process of the conversion of an elect remnant of Jews to Christian faith will go on?"

"Until the fulness of the Gentiles—the whole number of elect Gentiles—will have

come into the fold of the Church; that is, until the end of time, when the kingdom of grace will become the kingdom of glory. The fulness of the elect Jews according to the flesh (Rom. 11, 12), that is, the multitude of those who came to faith in Israel's day, as well as the remnant according to the election of grace which is still coming to faith in these present New Testament times of the Gentiles (Rom. 11, 5), will then have come into the kingdom of God and His Christ. (Rom. 11, 25; Lk. 21, 24.)"

"Is there then no reason to hope that there will ever be a universal conversion of all Jews?"

"Most emphatically not! On the contrary, it will always be just as with the Gentiles. Only the elect, the fulness of elect Jews will prove to be among the number of those who are eternally saved. (Cp. Rom. 2, 28f; 9, 6b-8ff.) These, together with the fulness of the elect Gentiles, constitute the true Israel of God. That is why the Bible, the inspired and infallible Scriptures of God, say, Romans 11, 25: '**So shall all Israel be saved.**' (Cp. Rom. 9, 23f; 10, 12.)"

"There is then no basis for a hope for any universal conversion of the Jews in the Holy Scriptures?"

"Quite the contrary. The Scriptures expressly teach that until the end of time the greater portion of present-day Jews will be blinded or hardened in unbelief by the just judgment of a just God. Romans 11, 7-25. The assumption that Israel according to the flesh, that is, the Jewish people as such, will still live to see a time before the end of the world when God's hardening judgment will be removed from it, flatly contradicts all that the inspired Apostle Paul has said concerning the hardening of Israel in the letter to the Romans and what the Scriptures say concerning hardening in general."*

"The question of the conversion of the Jews is not an open question then?"

"Decidedly not. Only such questions as Scripture has left open are open questions for a believing child of God. Whoever holds or teaches anything to the contrary must be made to understand that he is in conflict with the Word of God."

"Is this whole question of the conversion of the Jews as simple as all of that?"

"Yes, the Bible is simple and clear. The only mystery about this question, just as in the case of the Gentiles, is this, that some

should be hardened in unbelief, while others, as guilty as they, should nonetheless eventually be saved. (Cp. Rom. 9, 18; 11, 33-36.) This is simply part and parcel of the mystery of God's great Gospel in general. If you will but stop to think a bit about this matter, or look up a good Bible concordance under the word "mystery", you will soon realize that all of the great facts of the Gospel are in the last analysis mysteries to us and must remain such in this life. The **facts** concerning these mysteries have been made sufficiently known unto us to create faith, saving faith, in our hearts. It is not for us to question **how** these things can be. Such questioning leads to rationalism and unbelief. — If anyone is confused about the question of the conversion of the Jews it is simply because he has not let the blessed light of God's Holy Word shine into his heart and dispel the darkness and gloom that reign there by nature. The Bible will rid us of all ignorance and doubt if we will but accept its clear statements.— Incidentally, the Bible expressly warns us against any and all such Jewish fables as that of a general reinstatement of Jews in a glorious earthly kingdom, which is really at the bottom, the origin of all present-day millennialistic dreams and similar perversions of God's true promises."

"Can true Bible Christians establish and practice church fellowship—for instance, pulpit fellowship—with such as hold to and teach such perverted dreams as that of a hoped for general conversion of the Jews?"

"Certainly not. For this would mean to make oneself partaker of their sin of spreading false doctrine and corrupting the foundation of our faith. To permit such perversion a place alongside of truth would mean knowingly and wilfully to permit the unity of the Church to be destroyed through schismatic error. It would be wanton disregard of the sole authority of the clear Scripture, and the establishment of the authority of perverse men within God's Christendom. It would be disloyalty to Christ, who has charged us to make disciples of men by teaching them to observe all that He has commanded us. The basis of true Christian fellowship is unity of faith. Whoever is guilty of a departure from the faith once delivered to the saints must be won for the truth. That way, and that way only, lies true Christian fellowship. In any other case we must say with the Psalmist: 'I hate every false way.' (Ps. 119, 104; 128.)"

"Thank you ever so much, Mr. Rosenberg. I trust and pray with all confidence that God may keep you and all of us in the faith, and that He may, through the unswerving testi-

* Cp. Stoeckhardt, Roemerbrief, p. 539.

mony of His truth by those who are His own, graciously bring many others into His true Church and into His glorious eternal kingdom,—the eventual goal of every true Israelite, every true soldier of God.”

☉ Union With Missouri

(The following editorial appeared in **Folkebladet**, July 30, 1941. **Folkebladet** is the official organ of the Lutheran Free Church, one of the churches affiliated with the American Lutheran Conference. The article is here reproduced without alteration or comment, in a translation supplied by Rev. Norman M. Madson.—We would like to remind our readers that the American Lutheran Church at its Sandusky convention in 1938 voiced the solemn assurance that its Declaration is of such a nature that acceptance of it would mean that the Missouri Synod would have to fellowship the various churches of the heterogeneous American Lutheran Conference. We quote: “We believe that the Brief Statement viewed in the light of our Declaration is not in contradiction to the Minneapolis Theses which are the basis of our membership in the American Lutheran Conference.”—P. H. B.)

The Missouri Synod and The American Lutheran Church have for some time past held colloquies concerning union. These are now concluded, and the results are made known in a bulletin from The National Lutheran Council's Publicity Bureau.

Since the matter is of great import to The Lutheran Free Church we are herewith giving our readers in translation a summary of the negotiations, or perhaps more correctly, The Missouri Synod's answer to The American Lutheran Church and the appeal of the latter to Missouri.

The Missouri Synod has recently held its triennial convention and has adopted a reply (skrivelse) to The American Lutheran Church. It contains the following:

1. Joy is expressed over the fact that it has been possible to negotiate concerning this question with the ALC. They (Missouri) are aware of the fact that there are groups within this body (ALC) which are wholly with Missouri; but at the same time it is to be regretted that the ALC as a whole was not ready to come to a complete agreement with Missouri.

2. It is recommended that negotiations concerning unity be continued. This is in accordance with the express will of Jesus and

in harmony with such Scripture passages I Pet. 3, 15 and I Cor. 1, 10. The attempts which have been made have not been without fruit, and there are the promises of God that the testimony of His truth shall not be without fruit. Cp. Isa. 55, 10, 11.

3. It is requested that the ALC work on a document which will cover all the points in controversy. And they beg the ALC earnestly to consider the advisability of bringing about the framing of one document of agreement.

4. When the ALC has worked out and presented to the Mo. Syn. such a simple (enkelt) document covering the controverted points, then Missouri will take it under advisement and will send it to the other synods in the Synodical Conference, such as the Ohio Synod (The Free Church ought to know that Ohio is no longer a member of the Synodical Conference—N. A. M.) and the Wisconsin Synod, etc. The same document shall also by the ALC be presented to the other church bodies constituting The American Lutheran Conference. When the answers of the synods of the Synodical Conference have come back to Missouri, and likewise when the answers from the church bodies constituting the ALC also are sent to Missouri, then the Missouri Synod will be in a position to determine in how far it can enter upon a union with the ALC.

5. In this paragraph the ALC is reminded of the fact that it is not only doctrinal unity which is in question; practical questions are also involved, according to the Missouri rule, laid down by the fathers, that church practice must be in harmony with church doctrine, and where this is not found, they must then seek to have it rectified. As a more definite explanation of what is referred to in this, the reply says: “We refer particularly to the attitude towards the anti-Christian lodge, anti-Scriptural pulpit — and altar — fellowship, prayer-fellowship and all other forms of unionism.”

6. In this paragraph it is definitely asserted that no exchange of pulpits, altar-fellowship or prayer-fellowship are, on the basis of the negotiations which have been held, as yet permitted between the two church bodies. No pastor in the Missouri Synod has permission to act as though such fellowship existed between the ALC and the Missouri Synod.

To this a few words shall be added.

So far as we can understand, a document had previously been sent by the Missouri

Synod to the ALC for consideration. It is the reply to this which shall be dealt with as referred to above.

That will also mean that if the reply from the ALC is satisfactory to the Missouri Synod the way is cleared for a union of the two bodies.

If then that should happen (which of course will **not** happen) that the other four church bodies in the ALCf express themselves as being in agreement with the reply, which the ALC sends to the Missouri Synod, then the way will be cleared for Missouri membership in the ALCf.

If the opposite should happen (which is the most likely), that not all of the other four bodies in the ALCf would subscribe to the document, the ALC will then be faced with these alternatives: Either to leave Missouri alone and to remain as a member of the ALCf, or to let go of the ALCf and to join with Missouri. No one can tell what the ALC will do; perhaps it does not itself as yet know what it will do.

If the ALC should be declared agreed with Missouri but the other bodies in the ALCf, would not subscribe, and the ALC nevertheless remain as a member of the ALCf, then the ALC will occupy this position, that it is agreed with Missouri, but not recognized (fraternally) by it. It would still not bring about pulpit-, altar-, and prayer-fellowship between them, because Missouri would still look upon the ALC as heretical so long as it would not part company with heretics.

You can see, therefore, that so honest a thing as negotiations concerning church union may lead to worse complications than those which obtained before.

There is no one who will or can forbid the ALC to carry on negotiations of peace or union with Missouri, neither is there anyone who can hinder it from parting company with the ALCf if it prefers union with Missouri.

So much concerning that.

It is a very likely possibility (en noksaa nar muligte) that The Lutheran Free Church will be offered for acceptance a document pertaining to union with the Missouri Synod since our body is one of the other four in the ALCf.

The result of this would be, that the ALCf would be split. For it does not lie within the realm of possibility that The Lutheran Free Church would subscribe to such a document. And should a bare majority (which is

not very likely) want it, then it would mean the splitting of The Lutheran Free Church.

So far as the Norwegian Lutheran Church in America is concerned, it will have to be said that even if that body has a strong and influential faction which looks with longing eyes toward St. Louis, because they are descendants of fathers who were born there, and there is not an inconsiderable degree of friendly relationship between leaders in the N. L. C. A. and "The Little Synod" which is entirely with Missouri, yet we have reason to believe that the N. L. C. A. would think twice and three times, yea, perhaps even more times, before it parted company with the ALCf and the other Norwegian, Swedish, and Danish brethren.

The United Danish Lutheran Church stands about as does the Lutheran Free Church in this, that in it there may perhaps be those who care not whither it tends, but the leadership and the vast majority of congregations would refuse to subscribe.

Concerning the Augustana Synod it will also have to be said that it would be split if a majority in it would want to go with Missouri; something which would also happen in the Norwegian Lutheran Church.

It is therefore a sad picture which these negotiations concerning union paint for all of us.

The Lutheran Free Church will never go to Missouri on these stipulated conditions. That we believe to be a sure premise. We believe it ought to be made known.

What else could we do? To subscribe would be to deny our entire past, to declare that what we have struggled for through 45 years, and what Augsburg Seminary has worked for through 72 years, has had no worth. We would then say that George Syverdrup and Sven Oftedal were all wrong in their battle on behalf of the congregation, and lay activity and the education of our pastors, and the instruction of the young. (This assertion we shall return to in a later issue.)

Or has Missouri perhaps changed? It doesn't seem so.

Everything which comes from that quarter in the interest of union bears in its bosom the same old slavishness to the oldness of the letter (bogstavtraldom). Missouri is not able to understand that the solution of our present-day problems lies not in a much-ado about theses (satsevasenet), but on the contrary, in a working together—co-operation. Missouri

will never go along without doctrinal unity. And the doctrines must always conform to the Missourian pattern. This is a naivete which both surprises and offends. But it is German. The Germans don't seem to understand us inhabitants of the north. The Germans are the bearers of a slave-mentality which can never control the Nordic spirit. Thus it is in Germany in political affairs; and thus it is over here in church affairs.

Just consider this matter of unionism! Such rules and regulations we should go along on! Bible passages are cited as points of support. We on our part look upon such proof passages as a sinful misuse of God's word, because there isn't a single one of all the proof passages they present which, so far as the Church is concerned, has the least what so ever to do with the case in point. It is "irrelevant" proof material. Not a single one of all the Scripture passages which the Missouri Synod and those sailing in its wake have dished up against "unionism" has the least whatsoever to do with the matter; on the contrary, they condemn those who use Scripture passages to build up a wall between those whom Christ has acknowledged as His own. What right has Missouri or anyone else, to make demands which Scripture does not make, in order to be recognized as a Christian? Well, Missouri will perhaps say, we recognize them, as Christians after a fashion, to be sure, but not as such Christians with whom we can have fellowship. The great light which is risen over Missouri, and which no one else sees, had better remain with Missouri. Do you suppose it might be a spiritual counterpart of the German super-race theory?

We admit that we rather hesitate to write thus. But nevertheless we believe these to be sound and well-weighed words. We are so sick and tired of this Missourian self-exaltation which makes slaves of everybody else, that we could wish the ALCf would bolt the door—to make use of a Lutheran expression—when representations about our subscribing to Missouri's theses rap at the door.

There is not an altar, we don't suppose there is the pulpit, there is not a prayer-meeting in all of the Lutheran Free Church where a pastor from the Missouri Synod or a lay Christian from the same body would not be given the liberty to express himself, and where he would not be heartily welcome to take part without any further ado. We don't believe that anything or anybody would be harmed thereby. But if a Missouri pastor

should enter one of our pulpits now, or a lay Christian, man or woman, from that body should partake of the Lord's Supper at our altars or pray together with our people, they (the Missourians) would soon be the objects of the sharpest rebuke, with excommunication in prospect.

It is much to be deplored that such a condition should be found at this time o' day amongst us. It must be a yoke under which many Christians, pastors as well as laity in the Missouri Synod must be sighing, but which they themselves can not throw off. Perhaps it might help if we all told them what we really think about it (sa dem vor hjertens mening.)

Here stands the Church to-day in a world whose foundations are crumbling. Concerning these things great church bodies have little or nothing to say, while time, and money, and learning, and talent, of its kind, is spent in the formulating of hair-splitting definitions which only the learned can grasp, and which at best is but of academic interest, without a particle of practical value.

Let the Germans, amongst themselves, continue on with this, if they believe that these, for other people unessential, niceties are worth the bother. But let the rest of us be preserved from this Missouri leaven.

As a conclusion to this article it might be proper to cite Professor George Sverdrup's classic remark concerning this matter, as he writes in Vol. 2 of his collected works, p. 131. What a justified irony and sarcasm and wisdom is not packed into this unique paragraph, written in **Folkebladet** 59 years ago, but just as valid today:

"On the sharp points of theses the doctrine ought to rest; atop of this the congregation must be built; and wherever the congregation wants to move the least little bit in individual thought, speech or action, then must be sounded the warning cry: Be quiet! Don't move, or you will tumble into false doctrine and become a partaker with the heretics in their gruesome errors. And so the congregation sits there, unable to move hand or foot, because the least movement would capsize the high structure which stood teeter-tottering atop the 'purity of doctrine' theses."

They (Missouri) have kept on whetting the sharp points of theses all the while these 60 years.

And they are still at it!

● Dr. Reu's Complaint

In his article, "Must Negotiations with Missouri Now Cease?" which is discussed elsewhere in this issue of our journal, Dr. Reu complains of bitterness which he finds in the **Confessional Lutheran**. The bitterest thing to him is this that his theology is in one instance referred to as largely and notoriously un-Biblical, which, of course, means also un-Lutheran, and that he is referred to as one whom we regard as the outstanding unionist among Lutherans in America today. (*Kirchliche Zeitschrift*, Oct., p. 587.)

We can assure Dr. Reu that we find no pleasure in saying things which seem bitter to him, and which may, in fact, seem so even to some of our own brethren. If it were possible to tell the truth in discussing the question of union without hurting the feelings of anyone, friend or opponent, we would be only too glad to do so. But unfortunately this cannot be done.*

However, was our criticism perhaps undeserved in this particular case? Is Dr. Reu's theology soundly Biblical? In his lecture on "Unionism" (**In the Interest of Lutheran Unity**, L.B.C.) Dr. Reu again and again restricts the clearness of Scripture to the great central truths, the fundamental doctrines of Christian faith. But as for non-fundamentals, he holds that Scripture is "more or less obscure" in speaking of them. ("Unionism," p. 37.) This denial of the perspicuity of Scripture in **all** points of doctrine, by a restriction of it to central truths, is a fundamental error, subversive of the foundation of all theology. This we call un-Biblical.

As regards unionism, Dr. Reu is not only ready to unite with such as still differ with him in certain non-fundamental doctrines (this already would be unionism), but he is even willing to wink at differences in fundamental doctrines. In proof of this statement we submit the following:

1) With regard to the fundamental doctrine of the Church Dr. Reu is willing to fellowship those who differ with him as regards the question of "a visible side of the Church" if only they will not reject his opinion as false doctrine.

2) The Synodical Conference holds that those who assume errors, or the possibility of errors, in the Scriptures in so-called

minor matters are heretics who subvert the foundation of Christian faith. Dr. Reu, on the one hand, is in church fellowship with such heretics, and, on the other hand, is willing to fellowship those who condemn them.

3) Dr. Reu knows better than some of the leaders in the Missouri Synod that there is still left between the Synodical Conference and the American Lutheran Church a difference in the fundamental doctrine of conversion which has never been settled. The Synodical Conference teaches the equally evil conduct of such as are converted and such as, through their own fault, are lost. The American Lutheran Church teaches and stresses a dissimilar conduct of these. Anyone can see that two entirely different doctrines of conversion must result from these two contradictory premises. Yet Dr. Reu is willing to brush this difference aside by calling it a matter of terminology. This is unionism even according to Dr. Reu's own definition.

Let us not be concerned so much about our own honor in these union discussions. Let us rather be concerned about the honor and truth of God which are at stake among us.

—J. B.

● Criticism Of The "Cresset"

The **Confessional Lutheran** has found it necessary to criticize the **Cresset**. Criticism which we have voiced will be found under the title "Radicalism and the Cresset" in the July issue of our journal, and in a letter of Mrs. Goddard, lay-member of our Church, to President Behnken, published in its last issue. Although not mentioned by name, the **Cresset** has also been severely and justly flayed in a fine article on "The Filth of the Modern Realistic Novel" by Dr. P. E. Kretzmann in the August, 1941 issue of the **Concordia Theological Monthly**. (P. 614. Cp. **Cresset**, July, 1939, p. 51f.) Dr. Th. Graebner has similarly and rightly condemned views espoused and championed by the **Cresset**, in an excellent and timely article on "Politics, Radicalism, and the Child," in a recent issue of the **Lutheran Witness**. (Sept. 30, 1941, p. 333. Cp. **Cresset**, July, 1941, pp. 32-42.) So far as we know, however, it has remained for a publication outside of our Church to be the first to criticize the dangerous liberal tendencies of the **Cresset**. We refer to the weekly publication, "America in Danger: Weekly Expose of un-Americanism in Education, Fin-

* Cp. Dr. F. Pieper on this subject, as cited in "The Question of Personalities in Religious Controversy," C. L. May, p. 58.

ance, Labor, Politics, and Religion," edited by Chas. B. Hudson, issue of Jan. 27, 1941. (Published at Omaha, Neb.)

We do not by any means agree with all of the views of the publication which we have named. We cannot help, however, being interested in what it has to say regarding the **Cresset**; and, what is more, we must say that the criticism which it levels at the **Cresset** has for the most part been well deserved.

Deploring what he regards as "smear" attacks on Henry Ford and other prominent American citizens by the "subsidized sensational weekly, **Friday**, Editor Hudson goes on to say: "It is sickening to find the press of the ultra-conservative International Walther League, the **Cresset**, Jan. 1941, almost as guilty." As instances of the guilt which he charges against the **Cresset**, Hudson cites this journal's commendatory reviews of such books as M. W. Fodor's **The Revolution Is On** (Introduction by Dorothy Thompson), and others. The last portion of Hudson's criticism is perhaps particularly noteworthy. He censures the **Cresset** because "it praises **Living Biographies of Famous Rulers**" by Henry Thomas, "saying that another of his books 'has received high praise from George Bernard Shaw and Sinclair Lewis—which ought to mean something.' I'll say it should," Hudson comments, "but the **Cresset** fails to tell its readers that both of those favorable critics are atheists and worse!"

All good Walther Leaguers, and indeed every loyal member of the Synodical Conference, will no doubt join us in deeply deploring the fact that a periodical which is published in their midst and which many of them have helped to sponsor because it purports to speak "from the Christian point of view" should call forth such criticism within and without our Church as that which has here been noted.

—P. H. B.

● For The Record

During the month of October the American Lutheran Conference promoted a series of unionistic "Intersynodical Missionary Conferences" in Minneapolis, Rockford, Ill., and elsewhere. Members of the various churches of the American Lutheran Conference as well as of the United Lutheran Church participated in the program of these conferences. The program of the Minneapolis conference, an invitation to which was sent to every Luth-

eran pastor in the State of Minnesota, included the announcement of a common communion service, sponsored by the American Lutheran Church. It was announced, in various American Lutheran Church publications as well as on the program sent out with the invitations to which we have referred, that Dr. O. Geisemann and Dr. O. P. Kretzmann would have a part in the program of these conferences. This naturally gave occasion for much offense. Protests were voiced from many quarters within the Missouri Synod. President Belnken has vouched for the fact that the two brethren's not appearing on the program of these unionistic conferences as announced, after all, is to be construed as a realization on their part of the real nature of these meetings—something for which all should be thankful. It strikes us that the program of the Minnesota group of American Lutheran churches was particularly offensive according to the testimony of men like the brethren whom we have named and others. This seems hard to understand in view of the fact that we have been assured time and again that the Minnesota District of the American Lutheran Church represents a particularly conservative leaven within its own church. In a report on the Minneapolis conference in the **Lutheran Sentinel** of Nov. 12 (Norwegian Lutheran Church) Rev. N. A. Madson reports, by the way, that while the Twin City papers informed their readers that there were some five hundred in attendance at the Minneapolis conference, he did not by actual count find one hundred there. The **Lutheran Sentinel** article is worth reading in full. . . . **Lutheraneren**, official organ of the Norwegian Lutheran Church in America (American Lutheran Conference) reported in its issue of Oct. 29, in its column "From the Schools," that Dr. O. P. Kretzmann and Dr. Ralph Long, the latter a member of the American Lutheran Church, were speakers at the devotional hours on October 21 and 22 respectively, and that Pastor V. E. Johnson (Augustana Synod) had also spoken at one of these services—which reminds us that doctrinal indifference and its accompanying decay usually has begun in the Church's schools. . . . A lay member of our church—a woman, in fact—informs us that a benefit dinner for Valparaiso University was held at Zion Church in Columbus, Ohio (Missouri Synod) on Nov. 14 at which Professor Cotterman of the Capital University (A.L.C.) was the speaker. . . . **Among an increasing number of doctors of divinity there seems to be an increasing number of those whose divinity needs doctoring.**

P. H. B.

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REV. PAUL H. BURGDORF
Editor

REV. C. M. GULLERUD
Contributing Editor

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Unionism and Fundamental Unity

Reading carefully the first of Dr. Reu's two lectures "In the Interest of Lutheran Unity," which deals with Unionism, one can not fail to perceive that here an entirely different conception of unionism is presented from that held within the Synodical Conference. This lecture furnishes new evidence that, in spite of all assertions to the contrary, the old contrast of Iowa versus Missouri is still alive.

1. "A difference in doctrine which hitherto has been regarded as divisive is suddenly made to lose its divisive significance."

2. "Differences in doctrine are made to lose their divisive significance with a view to uniting hitherto separated churches."

4. "An attitude of tolerance" is assumed which "declares that every one may continue to hold his own private conviction and merely needs to respect and tolerate those of another."

The two reasons why unionism, specifically the Melanchthonian, is all wrong are also clearly and forcefully presented, p.20:-

"b) In allowing two opposite views concerning one doctrine to exist side by side one has entered upon an inclined plane which of necessity leads ever further into complete doctrinal indifference, as may plainly be seen from the most calamitous case on record, viz., the Prussian Union."

It is quite a pleasure to read these paragraphs. But immediately our joy is marred by a very pernicious restriction: the clearness and un-

ambiguity of the Scriptures are restricted to fundamental doctrines, not being permitted to refer to non-fundamentals also! This false principle, which is at the basis of the old Iowan theory of open questions, is repeated over and over again in this lecture. Not only twice on page 20, but also on pages 21, 31, 33, 35, 37, 38, etc. an unwarranted distinction is made between clearly revealed fundamentals or central truths and non-fundamentals, concerning which the language of Scripture is said to be "more or less obscure."

It does not help matters any that Dr. Reu occasionally stresses the fact that theological problems and matters of terminology must not be declared to be divisive of church fellowship. For, no Lutheran in his right mind would commit such a folly as to disrupt the unity of a church on account of a mere difference in terminology or of theological problems. Hence it only complicates matters and beclouds the issue when the difference between non-fundamental doctrines and matters of terminology is obliterated.

It always betrays a spirit of unionism when the distinction between fundamental and non-fundamental doctrines is used in order to maintain that certain doctrinal differences are not divisive. For the dogmaticians who introduced this distinction did not do it in order to weaken the binding force of certain doctrines, but simply to distinguish between doctrines, a knowledge of which is indispensable for salvation and doctrines of which this is not necessarily true. Besides, there is no universally accepted dividing line between fundamental and non-fundamental doctrines. Even the doctrine of the Lord's Supper is not by all Lutheran dogmaticians regarded as fundamental, because a person may be a Christian and saved without a right knowledge of this Sacrament. On page 31 of his lecture Dr. Reu counts predestination among the central Christian truths, a position which the Synodical Conference has always refused to take. Since Scripture does not draw a line between fundamentals and non-fundamentals, how then can this distinction be applied in our relation to the Reformed Churches, which do not regard the doctrines of Baptism and of the Lord's Supper as fundamental?

The main question between us and the American Lutheran Church at this point, therefore, is whether the clearness of the Scriptures extends over the whole realm of doctrine fundamental and non-fundamental, or whether it extends merely over fundamental doctrines, and not over non-fundamental doctrines also. The position of the Synodical Conference has always been that all doctrines are revealed in the Holy Scriptures in clear and unambiguous

words, while Iowa, and now the American Lutheran Church, contend that in non-fundamentals Scripture is not sufficiently clear to justify a division in the Church on account of substantial differences as arise in non-fundamental matters. This is no longer the Lutheran doctrine of the clarity of Scriptures. For it is not what Scripture teaches about itself. This Psalmist does not say: Thy Word is a lamp *unto* my feet and a light *unto* my path in fundamentals." Nor is there in all the numerous texts which teach the clearness and perspicuity of Scriptures the slightest hint that there are doctrines which are to be excepted from the rule. To restrict the clarity of the Scriptures to fundamental doctrines is, therefore, tantamount to contradicting the Word of God.

It is self-evident that from this fundamental error, that Scripture is not sufficiently clear in non-fundamental doctrines, an entirely different conception of unionism must result from what we regard as unionism. If it were true that the clarity of the Scripture must be restricted to fundamental doctrines, then insistence on doctrinal unity in non-fundamentals would indeed be sinful separatism.

In an abortive attempt at defending his untenable position, the Bible texts which are often rightly quoted in order to prove that all false teachers are to be avoided are dealt with by Dr. Reu in a manner similar to that of Dr. Brux. Dr. Reu's main argument amounts to this: The Synodical Conference applies Scriptural warnings against false doctrines to every case where tolerance of false doctrine comes into question. But now, these texts have in view very definite errors or errorists. They do not say in so many words that every error is to be avoided. Hence they are irrelevant in our case. Since no text can be found which says that those warnings are to be applied to all errors, the position of the Synodical Conference is untenable.

But there is no text either which says that those false teachers are to be avoided who err in fundamentals. So Dr. Reu has no Bible text at all for his position that fellowship with such errorists is unionism. Nor does he seem to need any from his subjective point of view. He says, p. 21: "No specific Scripture statements need be adduced in order to prove this point. That we must condemn this form of unionism follows with inner necessity from our conviction that the Scripture possesses absolute authority and unambiguousness with reference to all cardinal doctrines." But where do we get this conviction? As said before, Scripture nowhere says that it possesses absolute authority and unambiguousness "with reference to all cardinal doctrines." Thus Dr. Reu's distinction leaves us entirely without any Scriptural

foundation whatever against unionism.

There is only one attitude which is Scriptural and consistent with reference to this question, namely, the position of the Synodical Conference, according to which Christian doctrine is not ours but God's, God having revealed divine truth to us in the Holy Scriptures in clear and unambiguous words and charged us faithfully to keep this Word. Therefore, to sanction error in any point of revealed truth is unfaithfulness in guarding this treasure which has been entrusted to our care and would make us "partakers of other men's sins." For to contradict God in His Word is a sin. Hence the Synodical Conference is perfectly justified in applying each warning against participation in false doctrine to every case where we have to deal with error against the clear Word of God. If it were our duty first to prove that certain false teachers "serve their own belly" etc. **before** we are to **avoid** them, we should indeed be in a precarious position!

But did not even Dr. Walther admit that unity in fundamental articles is sufficient? Pastor Burgdorf has already pointed out in the August, 1940, issue of the *Confessional Lutheran* (p.52) that Dr. Reu (probably unintentionally) misquoted Dr. Walther when he made him say on page 33 of his lecture that the Church has never achieved greater unity than unity in fundamental articles. Dr. Walther did not speak of unity in fundamental articles, but of **fundamental unity**, which, according to Dr. Walther's own clear and unmistakable definition, is quite another thing. And it is indeed of great importance to have this term clearly defined.

What, then, is meant by "fundamental unity"? this term is to be distinguished from absolute or perfect unity. The Church has never enjoyed absolute unity in all questions that may arise in the sphere of Christian doctrine. Such unity is to be expected in the light of eternity only, when we shall see face to face. But a church body enjoys fundamental unity as long as it accepts without reservation the entire foundation of faith and nothing is tolerated in its midst that **"militates against the foundation of Christian faith**, be it the real foundation, or the dogmatic foundation, or the organic foundation." (*Lehre und Wehre*, XIV, p.111.)

There is really only one foundation of Christian faith, and hence of the Church, and this is Christ. 1 Cor. 3,11: "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." When the dogmaticians made a distinction between the real, the dogmatic, and the organic foundation, this is not meant as though the Church had two more foundations besides the one mentioned. It rather means that the one foundation, Christ, is regarded by us

in a threefold relation. There is, first of all, Christ Himself in His Person, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, the God-Man, who through His vicarious obedience, suffering and death has earned for us forgiveness of sin and eternal life. It is self-evident that when the Second Person of the Holy Trinity is particularly named in this connection He is not to be regarded essentially apart from the First and Third Persons. All Three Persons of the Holy Trinity concur in the work of our salvation, and all three are the object of saving faith. When Hoenecke and others, therefore, prefer to say that God, or the Holy Trinity, are the real foundation of our faith, there is no reason to object to this on the basis of 1 Cor. 3, 11. The meaning is the same.

But we find and have Christ only in His doctrine, which was proclaimed by the holy prophets during the time of the Old Testament, and, afterward, by Himself and His Apostles. And now, **all Christian doctrines which are the object of saving faith** are called its dogmatic foundation; not the individual doctrines, taken separately for themselves, but all of them taken as a whole, so that an error in any one of these doctrines militates against the dogmatic foundation, adulterates saving faith, and thus endangers man's salvation. (Cp. Baier, *Compendium*, Vol. I, p. 52.)

Among all the doctrines which form the dogmatic foundation of faith there is one which is rightly called the center and heart of the Christian religion, the most fundamental of all doctrines ("articulus fundamentalissimus"). It is the "articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae," which simply means, the article of faith with which the Church stands or falls. This doctrine is the doctrine of justification by faith without the deeds of the Law. Acceptance of this article in true faith constitutes one a Christian. Denial of this article means denial of the Christian religion. Impairing this article in the least means adulterating the Christian religion. Scripture texts like Romans 2, 23-28; Gal. 5, 4; Eph. 2, 8,9 and many others decidedly place this article in the center of revealed truth. For this reason some dogmaticians call the doctrine of justification the dogmatic foundation of faith.

But there are other doctrines which are so intimately related to this central truth that denial of them, or an error concerning them, immediately affects this center itself. Thus, false doctrine concerning the original depravity of man, concerning the means of grace, conversion, the Church, the Person of Christ, and others, automatically affects the doctrine of justification and thus endangers saving faith and the salvation of man. For this reason

other dogmaticians prefer to call the whole sum of these so-called fundamental articles the dogmatic foundation. They are termed fundamentals because an error concerning one of them militates against the dogmatic foundation of faith.

Again, there are doctrines, also clearly revealed in Scripture, which are more remote from the center, doctrines that are not the object of justifying faith, because they do not convey forgiveness of sin. Thus, for instance, we are not justified before God by accepting the doctrines of Antichrist, of the angels, of Sunday, etc. Nor are these doctrines related to justification in such a manner that an error regarding them inevitably corrupts the Gospel itself. It cannot be said that ignorance of one of these doctrines, or an error concerning them, immediately affects the dogmatic foundation of faith. For this reason they are called non-fundamental doctrines.

By the distinction which has been made non-fundamental doctrines are by no means to be declared unimportant or useless for the Christian faith. Nothing of what God has revealed is unimportant or useless to us. On the contrary, non-fundamental doctrines have their distinct value. The doctrine of the holy angels for instance, shows us the love of God toward His children in a light especially appealing to sinful man, and tends to strengthen our trust in God, and thus indirectly supports saving faith. The warnings concerning Antichrist are meant to guard Christians against the greatest danger which threatens their faith and their final salvation. And so with other non-fundamental doctrines. Just the same a person may be a Christian without a knowledge of these non-fundamental doctrines.

The doctrine concerning Christ, which is the proper object of justifying and saving faith, was known to the patriarchs before the flood by divine revelation. It was known to all saints of the Old and the New Testament. Prophets and Apostles, moved by the Holy Ghost, proclaimed it orally, and, moved by the same Spirit of God, have also laid down their teachings in writing. These divine writings in which alone we now find Christ are called the organic proper object of justifying and saving faith, "organ" or medium whereby Christ's teaching is conveyed to us. Hence, when we speak of the organic foundation of faith, we are not concerned with individual doctrines contained in the Bible, but with the principle that the Holy Scriptures in their entirety as the inspired Word of God are the only source of all Christian knowledge. Whoever casts any doubt on the absolute reliability of the Scriptures, by denying their plenary inspiration, or by as-

suming errors or the possibility of errors within them in so-called minor matters, subverts the organic foundation of Christian faith. And whoever limits the absolute authority of the clarity of Scripture to a certain group of truths, exempting another group of its doctrines, subverts the organic foundation of faith to just that extent.

In this sense we speak of the real, the dogmatic, and the organic foundation of Christian faith.

We now come to the question: what bearing has all of this on the fundamental unity of the Church? Our thesis is that a church body enjoys fundamental unity as long as nothing is tolerated in its midst that militates against the foundation of Christian faith, be it the real, the dogmatic, or the organic foundation.

We need not dwell here on the real foundation of faith. For it goes without saying that whoever does not accept Christ as the Son of God and only Savior of mankind is outside the Christian Church.

It is also clear that by any error in one of the fundamental doctrines the dogmatic foundation of faith is immediately involved. Hence the fundamental unity of the Church is involved by such an error. Even in the American Lutheran Church this principle is acknowledged, as Dr. Reu's lecture on Unionism shows. At least it is acknowledged in theory if not always in fact.

But how about errors with regard to other doctrines which have no direct bearing on the way to salvation, the so-called non-fundamentals? We have seen that an error in these doctrines does not subvert the dogmatic foundation of the Church. But it may or may not subvert the organic foundation of the Church. For it may be that the erring brother in such a case clings with all his heart to the Scriptures as the infallible Word of God, his error being caused merely by some weakness in his understanding. In this case such a one does not subvert the organic foundation of faith.

Nor is the fundamental unity of a church body broken as long as an erring brother, acknowledging the absolute authority of the Scriptures is open to conviction and willing to give up his tenet as soon as it is proven to him that his position is incompatible with Scripture.

On the other hand, it may be that one who errs really harbors wrong ideas concerning the Scriptures. His error may even be an immediate consequence of his faulty attitude over against the Scriptures. In that case his error, though it concern a non-fundamental doctrine, at once assumes an entirely different aspect. It no longer leaves the organic foundation of

faith intact. Hence the fundamental unity of a church body is broken in that case even by such an error in non-fundamentals.

These considerations may help us to see our way clearly when it comes to the question: under what circumstances is an error divisive of church-fellowship?

When we keep in mind the fact that certain errors in their very nature subvert the dogmatic foundation of the Church, while others do not, then we shall see the reason why an error in this second group need not under all circumstances lead to a severance of church fellowship. The reason is **not** because these doctrines are not clearly revealed in the Scriptures, as are others. For they are. Nor is it because they are, or seem to be, less important. For this would imply that we need not be so conscientious in doctrinal matters which seem less important to us. If the Scriptures inculcate faithfulness in little things in the sphere of earthly goods (Luke 16, 10f), how much more faithful must we then be in the sphere of spiritual treasures entrusted to us, such as the pure doctrine which God has revealed to us, even if such faithfulness in relatively less important points of doctrine is termed narrow-mindedness, intellectualism, provincialism, separatism, and the like, by such as are inclined to tolerate errors in non-fundamentals!

The true reason why an error in doctrines which are more remote from the center of Christian faith is not under all circumstances to be treated as divisive of fellowship is this: a brother or a church body harboring such an error as does not overthrow the real, nor the dogmatic foundation of faith may in their heart leave also the organic foundation, the authority of the Scriptures, intact, and in that case the fundamental unity of the Church is not broken. Whether or not this is the case will usually become evident in the course of the discussion of that difference. Hence all depends on the question: does the one who errs acknowledge the absolute authority of the Scriptures?

This question is sometimes not easily decided. Especially when an erring brother is weak in Christian knowledge, or deficient in his logic, there may be cases in which the decision must be left in suspense a long time, if not indefinitely. But while a brother who errs without subverting the foundation of faith must be tolerated, this does not mean that his error may be tolerated. Much less does it mean that error should have equal right with the truth within an orthodox church body. Error must be rejected and fought under all circumstances. Least of all can it be tolerated

that error—any error—be publicly taught.

On the other hand, there are cases where subversion of the organic foundation of faith is so evident from the very beginning that differences in question must be treated as divisive from the outset. We shall have to discuss such cases in a future issue of our journal.

To sum up, while such error as does not directly militate against the dogmatic foundation of faith **may** eventually become an occasion for disruption of fellowship, one which in any way violates the dogmatic foundation, if stubbornly adhered to, **must**, on account of its subversive nature, lead to a severance of church fellowship.

How this works out in practice will be shown when we conclude our series of articles on "The Dogmatic-Historical Background of the Present Union Movement." Differences which remain to be treated in this series of articles, and which may be dealt with at somewhat lesser length than differences discussed in former articles, are: the principle of Open Questions, the doctrine of Sunday, and sundry errors connected with Chiliasm.

J. B.

Inaccuracies—And Worse!

Reviewing Prof. Polack's book, "The Building of a Great Church," in a spirit of kindness, in a recent issue of the **Lutheran Standard** (A.L.C.), Dr. J. O. Lang points out a slight mistake the author made, in stating that the Ohio, Iowa, and Buffalo Synods united on the basis of the Chicago Theses. Correcting this statement, Dr. Lang says that the doctrinal agreement on the basis of which fellowship was established between Ohio, Iowa, and later also Buffalo, was rather stated in the Toledo Theses of 1909. (**Lutheran Standard**, Sept. 27, 1941, p.15.)

This gives us occasion for a bit of discussion regarding the notorious Chicago Theses.

The inaccuracy to which Dr. Lang calls attention is really of little consequence. For, as to their doctrinal content, the Chicago Theses are fully in harmony with the Toledo Theses. The American Lutheran Church might, therefore, just as well have chosen the Chicago Theses for a basis of its fellowship as far as doctrine is concerned. There was, however, a reason for not doing this. For there is a vast difference as to **wording** of the Toledo Theses and the Chicago Theses. The Toledo Theses were drawn up in opposition to the Synodical Conference and clearly show the points of doctrine in which Ohio and Iowa agreed over against Missouri. The Chicago Theses, on the

other hand, were, as Dr. Lang has intimated, compiled by representatives of the various synods concerned (Ohio, Iowa, Buffalo, Missouri Wisconsin) for the purpose of gaining a basis for church-fellowship among these synods which were (and are to this day) not in doctrinal agreement. The Chicago Theses, in spite of their "Missourian" phraseology, by which the representatives of the Synodical Conference were misled, by their wording safeguarded the peculiar tenets of the Ohio and Iowa Synods in such a manner as to enable these synods to accept them without sacrificing their traditional tenets. Ample proof for this charge with regard to the doctrines of Conversion, Predestination, the Church, and the Ministry has been offered in previous issues of the **Confessional Lutheran**.

Dr. Lang refers to the particular purpose of the Chicago Theses when he says: "To be sure, Ohio, Iowa, and Buffalo subscribed to the Chicago Theses of 1929, but these had particular reference to Missouri; and the American Lutheran Church still regrets that Missouri rejected them." Certainly, if the Missouri Synod had accepted that unionistic document, then a union of the Synodical Conference with Ohio-Iowa-Buffalo might have been consummated at that time. We thank God that such a calamity was prevented.

More serious than the slight mistake mentioned by Dr. Lang, because misleading and therefore dangerous, is the manner in which the report of Committee 3 at the Ft. Wayne Convention of the Missouri Synod (1941) dealt with the Chicago Theses. This report contains so much which is good and true that we point out its flaws only reluctantly. But this must be done.

The report we have referred to says that ".....in 1929 our committee presented to our Synod doctrinal theses upon which all parties concerned (representatives of the Missouri, Wisconsin, Iowa, Ohio, and Buffalo synods) had agreed. The efforts put forth did not result in uniting the synods which were represented in the discussions at the committee meetings." (Proceedings of the Ft. Wayne Convention, 1941, p.296) What impression will anyone who is not familiar with all the facts and who accepts this report on its face value gain from these words? Certainly such a one must gain the impression that in 1929 unity of doctrine had been achieved among the synods concerned, that at the time everyone was satisfied, and that it is to be regretted that, after all, no practical results were achieved in 1929.

Now, it is true that the words "all parties concerned" are qualified in the Ft. Wayne Committee report by the parenthetical addition

"(representatives of the Missouri, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Buffalo synods)." But it is also true that many more persons than those representatives, persons utterly dissatisfied with the theses, were concerned at that time. Since May, 1920, protests had been entered uninterruptedly with the Intersynodical Committee, the president of the Missouri Synod, the St. Louis faculty, and at various conferences, contending and offering proof for the contention that the Chicago Theses were ambiguous, leaving room both for the doctrine of the Missouri Synod and the contrary doctrine of its opponents.

Various committees were appointed to examine such protests. The Northern Illinois District Conference was informed by its committee that after conscientious and thorough study and examination of the evidence presented, there could be no doubt that protests were justified and that the Chicago Theses are essentially unionistic. Similar discussions went on in the Iowa District. An "Examining Committee" had been appointed by the Missouri Synod to consider such protests. On the basis of documentary evidence which it had weighed for years, this committee laid such a smashing condemnation of the Chicago Theses before the River Forest convention of the Missouri Synod in 1929 that the resolutions committee which had to report on this matter could not possibly recommend the theses for acceptance. We shall here quote the report of the Examining Committee. It reads, in part:

"After careful examination of the revised theses of August, 1928, your Committee finds itself compelled to advise Synod to reject these theses as a possible basis for union with the synods of Ohio, Iowa, and Buffalo, since all chapters and a number of paragraphs are inadequate. At times they do not touch upon the point of controversy; at times they are so phrased that both parties can find in them their own opinion; at times they incline more to the position of our opponents than to our own..... Your Committee considers it a hopeless undertaking to make these theses unobjectionable from the view of pure doctrine. It would be better to discard them as a failure." (Proceedings, 1929, p. 110-112.)

Also Dr. Pieper's opinion was that acceptance of the Chicago Theses was entirely out of the question. The report of the resolutions committee on intersynodical matters, 1929, of which he was chairman, reads in part:

"We recommend, however, that Synod do not accept the theses in their present form, for the following reasons:-

"a) Because many serious objections have been raised by members of Synod, which, in our opinion should be carefully considered and eventually taken into account in any further work concerning the theses." (Loc. cit., p. 112f.)

The synod adopted the recommendations which were made, refusing to accept the theses. Anyone who would still try to make out a good case for the notorious Chicago Theses clearly indicates thereby that he is out of step with the Missouri Synod's position as it was officially and definitively declared in 1929.

And now we ask: If Committee 3 at Ft. Wayne did not wish to mention the facts which we have submitted, was it then fair, in a one-sided manner, to create the impression as though all was well with the Chicago Theses? It is true, it might have been disastrous for the current union movement to lay all pertinent facts before the Synod at Ft. Wayne. For, as everyone who has somewhat more intimate knowledge of the facts knows, the A.L.C. Declaration stands and falls with the Chicago Theses, since both documents are woven of one cloth. But for this very reason Committee 3 should have presented either both sides concerning the Chicago Theses or none at all.

After the Missouri Synod had refused to accept the Chicago Theses, it would have been the proper thing to iron out differences in its own midst. For there was now a faction within the Missouri Synod which was still convinced that there was doctrinal unity between the Synodical Conference and its former opponents, while the majority within the synod rejected the supposed basis of such unity as a delusion—certainly a difference of opinion fraught with the gravest dangers for unity within its own midst. What could have been more natural for the Missouri Synod than to do all in its power to come to an agreement among itself. The writer of these lines has since 1929 tried in various ways to have such fatal dissension within the Missouri Synod removed.

When the American Lutheran Church approached the Synodical Conference in 1935 with the request for renewed doctrinal discussions, the Missouri Synod entered into negotiations with the American Lutheran Church trying to win this church-body over to its position without having settled the disagreement in its own midst! As was to be expected, the results achieved by these efforts were just as negative as those of the Chicago Theses. For while the Missouri Synod, at its St. Louis Convention in 1938, accepted the Brief Statement, the A.L.C. Declaration, and the provisions of the entire report of Committee 16

(three documents which in part even contradict each other) as its "doctrinal basis for future church-fellowship" with the American Lutheran Church, the latter church accepted another basis. It more consistently declared the first two of the aforementioned documents a sufficient basis for agreement from its peculiar (unionistic) point of view, asking that the Brief Statement of the Missouri Synod be read "in the light of" its own Declaration. It herewith suggested a basis for fellowship which is practically the same as that of the Chicago Theses which the Missouri Synod refused to accept in 1929. Is it to be wondered at that in view of such a situation protests again arose from all sides against a supposed "unity" which some brethren imagined to exist between the Missouri Synod and the American Lutheran Church since 1938?

In the course of the controversy which necessarily arose within the Synodical Conference with regard to the untenable St. Louis Resolutions of 1938 the **Lutheran Witness**, in its issue of May 28, 1940, presented the first of a series of articles under the heading "Lutheran Union: A Discussion." In these articles the editors of the **Lutheran Witness** tried to show that, beginning already with the Milwaukee Colloquy in 1867 (!), followed by the Chicago Theses in 1929, and the the A.L.C. Declaration of 1938, doctrinal unity had been achieved between the American Lutheran Church and the Missouri Synod. The St. Louis Resolution, the **Lutheran Witness** says, "signifies that two church-bodies which for sixty to ninety years have had controversy in doctrine are officially now on the same doctrinal platform." (**Lutheran Witness**, June 11, 1940, p. 201)

The **Lutheran Witness** articles to which we are referring are so full of historical and theological inaccuracies and fallacies, they are so misleading and dangerous, that it would be inexcusable negligence to let them go unchallenged. After futile private efforts, therefore, this writer made his last attempt at having this unpleasant affair settled. In a memorial to the Missouri Synod he requested its Ft. Wayne Convention to appoint a committee for the purpose of carefully examining his objections to these articles and the documents in his possession on which such objections are based. The documents to be studied and the whole of the material which would have to be presented as evidence is too extensive to have enabled thorough examination during the few days of a synodical convention. The petitioner therefore asked for a special committee which might during the months following the convention have at leisure studied and weighed pertinent evidence from all angles. But, like

all former efforts, this last attempt towards coming to an agreement proved to be in vain. The request to which we refer (Unprinted Memorial No. 15) was turned down on the ground that "the charge mentioned in the memorial has not been substantiated by specific evidence." (Proceedings, 1941, p. 309.)

In view of this final failure, what else can remain to be done than to discuss the various fallacies in the above mentioned articles in a publication such as the **Confessional Lutheran**? Certainly this is not a pleasant task. But it must be done. And it will be done, God willing, in future issues of the **Confessional Lutheran**.

J. B.

The Position of the American Lutheran Church With Regard To The Holy Scriptures

By Rev. Geo. O. Lillegard
(Continued)

THE SUFFICIENCY OF SCRIPTURE

It is a fundamental part of Lutheran doctrine, as opposed to Roman Catholic and rationalistic, Modernistic teaching, that the Holy Scriptures are in themselves sufficient and perfect, "able to make us wise unto salvation" (II Tim. 3, 14); "the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple." (Ps. 19, 7.) As Dr. Pieper says in his "Christliche Dogmatik," Vol. I: It is self-evident that by surrendering the perfection or sufficiency of Scripture, the Scripture principle is abandoned. For if Scripture needs to be supplemented by anything outside itself, then the Christian Church is thereby, *eo ipso*, torn away from its foundation, the word of the apostles and prophets, and is made to stand on the person of the one allegedly supplementing it" (p. 385) (Tr. from the German by L.) In this connection he points out that although Scripture is "not a textbook of ordinary human science," yet when "Scripture in passing touches on such things as belong in the field of natural science, then it always is right, all assertions of human 'science' to the contrary notwithstanding" (p. 384).

But Dr. M. Reu, whose essay "What Is Scripture?" we have been reviewing, limits the sufficiency of Scripture strictly to "religious problems, because the religious field alone is its province; other problems may be solved by science" (p. 76). Therefore it is that the A.L.C. has objected to such statements as this in the

Brief Statement of the Missouri Synod: "We teach that the first man was not brutelike nor merely capable of intellectual development, but that God created man in his own image—endowed with a truly scientific knowledge of nature, Gen. 2, 19-23." That man was created "in true knowledge of God and in true righteousness and holiness" is something they can accept because that is in the "religious field." But to say that the first man was "endowed with a truly scientific knowledge of nature," they will not accept, in spite of Gen. 2, 19-23, because that encroaches upon the field of "science,"—as if human science could ever arrive at any real knowledge of the intellectual equipment of the first man, before the Fall, apart from the inspired Word of the Creator himself!

Furthermore, although Dr. Reu says that "Scripture is also sufficient for the individual Christian; it offers him enough light, so that he can find the way to the Father," yet he adds: "—but if he independently studies the Bible he should not despise nor ignore the assured results of the Church's theological scholarship, although it is to be used with discrimination." If he had said: "The Confessions of the orthodox Lutheran Church," we could agree, since those Confessions teach nothing than the Word of God in a clear and systematized form. But this phrase "the assured results of theological scholarship" is a favorite expression of Modernists and Higher Critics and points more often to their destructive criticism and Godless perversion of Bible teaching than to sound doctrine. Therefore it is that we do not ask any layman to be guided by anything whatever than the Word itself and point to our Confessions, not as guides to an understanding of the Bible, but as proofs that our Church teaches nothing but Bible truths. The fact is that more people have lost their faith by paying too much attention to "the assured results of theological scholarship" than through anything else; and that the wisdom of Lutheran principle, "the Word alone," is repeatedly demonstrated by the manner in which learned theologians go astray from the simple truths of the Bible, misleading all those who "in their simplicity go with" them (II Sam. 15, 11).

In this connection, Dr. Reu also says that it "is better not to use it (the term 'perfectio'), because it is so often misunderstood"; and then goes on to ridicule those Lutheran dogmatists who have maintained that to charge "Holy Scripture with a single barbarism," in language and style, would be "a by no means insignificant blasphemy." Here, too, Dr. Pieper defends

those whom Dr. Reu attacks, showing in detail that the old Lutheran dogmaticians were entirely correct when they claimed, both that the language and style of the original Hebrew and Greek Testaments were the very best for this purpose, and that the texts handed down to us are in every essential the same as those originally written by the prophets and apostles. Dr. Reu's remarks on these points reveal a strange ignorance of the conclusions of modern Greek scholars, whose researches, like those of the archeologists, confirm the claims made for the Bible by believing theologians from the beginning.

There are other things in Dr. Reu's essay which are contrary to the sound doctrine stated so fully and clearly in Dr. Pieper's great work. But we believe we have pointed out most of the errors which our readers need to know about in order to arrive at a correct judgment regarding the nature of the proposed union between the Missouri Synod and the A.L.C. Since there is disagreement even regarding the very foundation of all teachings, the Word of God itself, it is vain to assume that agreement can be real and lasting on any of the teachings of that Word. Those who have been trying to assure our people that Dr. Reu and the A.L.C. now stand as one with us on the doctrine of Scripture, over against the liberal U.L.C., have the facts against them. Dr. Reu, indeed, claims that "the position taken by him in this pamphlet ("What Is Scripture?") is in full consonance with Luther's standpoint" (p. 83). But Dr. Pieper proves that the position taken by him agrees fully with Luther's standpoint; and we have reviewed some of the points on which Dr. Reu and Dr. Pieper take opposite sides. There will, undoubtedly, be those who will insist that Luther and Pieper and Reu all teach the same thing,—there is no essential difference between them. We have been repeatedly told, even during the last year, after the publication of Dr. Reu's essay, that he and the A.L.C. agree with the Missouri Synod on Scripture. We submit that those who claim this are guilty of "wishful thinking," to say the least, and are closing their eyes to the facts. It was not without reason that Dr. Koen in his last address to the Norwegian Synod, made his essay on the "Inspiration of Scripture" his "testament" to the Synod. He saw how all the weaknesses and errors in the Lutheran Churches of America were rooted in false or inadequate ideas regarding Scripture and its authority: that the real battle for true Lutheranism would have to be fought on that front. The sum and substance of the matter is that only the Word of God can create true spiritual unity; only where the Word of God is accepted

as the sole authority, to the utter exclusion of every other factor, can there be profitable discussion regarding Christian doctrine; only where doctrinal discussions and agreements are based on the Word alone, accepting nothing but what the Word teaches and everything that the Word teaches, can there be real unity. By this touchstone, the A.L.C. agreement with the Missouri Synod is not one that we as true Lutherans can accept or endorse. We hope and believe that the Missouri Synod will also retrace its steps and undo, in this year of grace, 1941, some of the harm done to the cause of conservative Christianity by the acceptance of the 1938 resolutions on Union with the A.L.C.—**Lutheran Sentinel** (Norwegian Synod), May, 27, 1941.

(To be Continued)

Ft. Wayne Conventions of The Missouri Synod 1857-1941

(Editorial Note — As is pointed out in the subsequent article, the Missouri Synod, at its Ft. Wayne Convention in June, asked pastoral conferences to study especially also the Four Points concerning the Doctrine of the Last Things, with reference to which the American Lutheran Church insists on un-Scriptural concessions in the interest of the modernistic liberalism that exists in its own midst and in the American Lutheran Conference with which it is affiliated as well as elsewhere. The present essay together with other articles appearing in this issue will prove very helpful to conferences in studying these questions with a view toward preserving the Scriptural and Confessional position which the Missouri Synod and the entire Synodical Conference have by the grace of God always maintained. — P. H. B.)

Eighty-four years ago, the Missouri Synod was assembled in Convention at Fort Wayne, Ind. Fourteen sessions of that Convention were devoted to a discussion of the doctrine of the Last Things. The reason so much time was devoted to the discussion of this single subject was that one within the midst of the Missouri Synod, Pastor Schieferdecker, was unwilling to subscribe unqualifiedly to the doctrine confessed by the Missouri Synod on this point. After the Synod in 1857 had spent eleven sessions in dealing with Pastor Schieferdecker, the Synod appointed a Committee which was to formulate questions to which Pastor Schieferdecker was to give definite answers of either "yes" or "no". These questions, together with the answers given, are reported as follows:

"1. Will the Church of Christ in its proper

sense (the whole number of believers) remain invisible and hidden, under the holy cross, until the last day?

Answer: Yes; if the hope is not thereby rejected, that the kingdom of God also in this world will celebrate a final victory over the antichristian world-powers, and will show itself in a great measure of heavenly spiritual goodness, namely in a widespread true knowledge of God and Jesus Christ.

2. Will the universal resurrection of all the dead, the righteous as well as the unrighteous, without exception, take place alone and exclusively on the last day?

Answer: Yes, but I cannot subscribe to the words 'without exception.'

3. Is the visible return of Christ alone and exclusively to be placed at the Last Day as a thing which shall happen alone and exclusively for the judgment of all people, without exception?

Answer: Yes, if I am not thereby bound to reject a preliminary return of Christ for the destruction of the Antichrist, the manner of which, however, I leave problematic (ungewiss).—(In order to get the full picture of Pastor Schieferdecker's views on this question it may help our readers to know that in an earlier session the Synod had asked Pastor Schieferdecker to give a definite answer as to the following question: "Do you confess with all Christendom that the Lord Jesus Christ may come at any moment for the final judgment?" To this question, Pastor Schieferdecker delivered the following written answer: "To the question whether I believe that the Lord Jesus Christ might come even today in His second Advent, for the last general judgment, I answer: Through a comparison and consideration of the prophetic passages which deal with the Last Things, I must conclude that all things are not yet fulfilled which the Lord Christ will permit to happen to His Church before the end of His kingdom of grace, yet I hold that it is nevertheless not impossible that the Lord may come at any moment, since I do not consider myself infallible in the understanding of prophetic passages." With this answer, the Synod had not been satisfied. Syn. Ber. 1857, p. 37.)

4. Is every Chiliastic view which does not leave these three points undisputed, to be condemned and is it against the 17th article of the Augsburg Confession?

Answer: Yes, if it is admitted that the reservations I have pointed out in 1, 2, 3, do not disagree with the 17th article of the Augustana.

5. Does Pastor Schieferdecker acknowledge and admit that he has erred and is he now also ready to agree to the resolutions of our West-

ern District Synod? (It is interesting to note that among other things, the resolutions of the Western District contained this one: 'We reject as un-Biblical and as leading to a false Chiliastic conception of the Church the doctrine that according to Rom. 11, 25, 26 and other passages, a general or at least an unprecedented, particularly numerous conversion of the Jews shall precede the last day and is to be expected.' Syn. Ber., 1857, p. 25.)

Answer: I have nowhere expressly professed adherence to the selfsame views of the Millennium, which Pastor Gruber, Sr. expressed at the Synod at Altenburg. I did not, however, give my assent to the resolutions of the Western District, because it was impossible for me to reject something which I consider uncertain. For the same reason I can not today give my assent to the judgment in question, since I consider uncertain:

a) How far the restriction of Satan lasts a thousand years goes.

b) If all people without exception will be Christianized.

c) In what manner the advent of Christ for the judgment over the Antichrist will be revealed.

d) If the resurrection announced in Rev. 20 is a bodily one or not. Syn. Ber. 1857, pp. 43-44.

It was deplored on the part of the Synod that Pastor Schieferdecker found it necessary to make so many reservations in his answer. Because of these reservations, the Synod found Pastor Schieferdecker's answers unsatisfactory, and having stated that since all the questions at issue involved the simplest articles of faith, and since it was now clear that Pastor Schieferdecker was of another spirit, the Synod declared the fellowship of Pastor Schieferdecker with the Missouri Synod broken. Later, Pastor Schieferdecker joined the Iowa Synod where such views as his were tolerated and looked upon as open questions.

It will be noted that Pastor Schieferdecker did not insist that the Missouri Synod accept his views. All he was asking for was that he might, because of his uncertainty, be permitted to retain the reservations which he found it necessary to make in his answers to the questions directed to him. The Missouri Synod in 1857 found it impossible to grant these reservations and found it necessary to sever fellowship with one who insisted on such reservations. The A.L.C. in its Declaration has made certain reservations to its acceptance of certain matters concerning the Doctrine of the Last Things as confessed in the Brief Statement of the Missouri Synod. Did the Missouri Synod in 1938 grant tolerance for these reservations

made by the A.L.C., and if so was it right to do so? That is a question which invites the study of all pastors and lay-people of our Synod. The need for such a study was recognized by the 1941 Delegate Synod at Ft. Wayne which, as a part of its report on Lutheran Union, adopted the following resolution: "That in addition to any controversial doctrines that may need further study and clarification the teachings concerning Antichrist, the conversion of the Jews, the physical resurrection of the martyrs, and the fulfilment of the thousand years be given careful study by the committee and pastoral conferences on the basis of Scripture and our Confessions, and that also in reference to these teachings we endeavor to establish full agreement." *Luth. Wit.* Vol. LX. p. 240.

In studying this whole question we commend to our readers for devout and careful meditation, the report of the Synod Meeting at Fort Wayne, Ind., in 1857.

C. M. G.

What Price Fellowship?

The American Lutheran Church has recently denounced the attitude of the Missouri Synod, and more specifically that of pastors of the Missouri Synod, because they will not practice unionistic fellowship with Churches outside the Ev. Luth. Synodical Conference. We here reproduce in its entirety an article, titled "Part of the Answer," from the *Lutheran Standard* (A.L.C.) of Oct. 25, in which this denunciation occurs:-

"The statistician of the Missouri Synod (Pastor S. Michael) contributes a fine article to the September 16 issue of the *Lutheran Witness*, titled, "What About Those Losses?" The article points out that in 1940 the number of members of all ages lost to their church (Synodical Conference) through withdrawal, excommunication, and removal without being transferred amounted to 1.02 per cent of the baptized membership. That, of course, does not mean that the total membership of the Missouri Synod is declining, for its gains in membership far more than offset these and other losses (such as losses by death). But it does mean that each year there is a leakage of about one out of every one hundred souls in the Missouri Synod (including the enrolled members of the Sunday schools) through what might be called "preventable causes." We believe that, compared with other church bodies, this loss is quite low, and that the Missouri Synod can thank God that it is no higher. Furthermore, we commend the leadership of this Synod for be-

ing genuinely concerned about this matter and for raising the question, "What can be done to guard against such losses?"

With all of this we are in complete agreement. But we have a word to add in answer to Pastor Michael's question, "Who will add other considerations which might serve to lessen the gloomy aspect of the situation?" That is, who will help explain those reported losses of one out of every hundred? We shall! Brother, part of your "loss" is your own fault and the fault of some pastors in your Synod. The question you ask your pastors is, "How many of your members of all ages have been lost to our Church (Synodical Conference)?" You count as lost any who do not "find their way back into some church or mission of our Synod or fellow church-body of the Synodical Conference." Well, my friend, if such "lost" souls have united with a church of some Lutheran body outside the Synodical Conference, they have not been lost. So the very form of your question is partly to blame for your "loss." Furthermore, many pastors in the Missouri Synod will not give their members a letter of transfer or even a letter of standing to non-Synodical Conference churches. Some of us outside the Missouri Synod have gotten tired of being rebuffed when we made a courteous request for such a letter, with the result that Missouri Synod members are at times received without a letter from their home church. That helps to account for your paper "loss." If the pastors of the Missouri Synod would take a new and more Christian attitude toward having their members join Lutheran churches outside of the Synodical Conference, that would be a real step toward solving the problem of these "losses" in the Synodical Conference. So long as pastors continue to write to such members: "I do not mean to say that you cannot be saved in _____ church (one of the congregations of the American Lutheran Church), but why play with fire?" (an actual quotation from a letter sent by a Missouri Synod pastor to a lady who had moved into a town where there was no congregation of her synod) the statistician of the Missouri Synod is going to have to worry about "losses" each year. If they are only paper losses, that is, if that lady actually joined our American Lutheran Church congregation in spite of the attitude of her pastor, there is nothing to be concerned about. But if such a high-handed way of dealing with souls drove that lady out of the Christian Church altogether, that is a loss indeed. And the responsibility for it is easily placed."

This denunciation invites several comments.

1) Putting the best construction on the statement of the *Lutheran Standard*, we must say that

its editor is guilty of a glaring misrepresentation when he makes it appear as though statistician Michael of the Missouri Synod had said that he counts as lost any who do not find their way back into some church or mission of the Missouri Synod or a fellow church-body of the Synodical Conference, and then counters: "Well, my friend, if such 'lost' souls have united with a church of some Lutheran body outside the Synodical Conference, they have not been lost." Pastor Michael had clearly said that such members as he was speaking of had "been lost to our Church (Synodical Conference)." The very article which we have cited contains enough evidence to show the misrepresentation of which the **Lutheran Standard** is guilty.

2) The article which we have reproduced clearly shows that the American Lutheran Church assumes an entirely different attitude regarding the question of Christian fellowship from that which the Synodical Conference maintains in accordance with Scripture. It demands that if we wish to be recognized as wholly Christian in our attitude we must unconditionally recommend our members to the spiritual care of churches outside the Synodical Conference (the language is broad enough to include both the various churches of the American Lutheran Conference and the United Lutheran Church), telling them to commune at its altars and to accept the preaching in its pulpits despite any and all false doctrine and practices that prevail there.

We cannot help calling attention to the fact that this demand is quite in keeping with the accepted and declared unionistic principles of the American Lutheran Church, which officially and solemnly voiced the assurance at Sandusky (1938) that its Declaration is of such a nature that acceptance of it would mean that the Missouri Synod had agreed to a document which will make fellowship with the various unorthodox Churches of the American Lutheran Conferences not only possible, but logically necessary.

3) We shall urge brethren to remain courteous in offering a necessary Christian rebuff

to ministers of the American Lutheran Church (as well as to others) when they ask that their unionistic and unorthodox fellowship be recommended to members of the Missouri Synod or of the Synodical Conference. We would never, for instance, condone letters such as the following (an actual letter sent to a Missouri Synod Pastor of another Lutheran Church):-

"This is to certify that Mr. and Mrs. of are members in good standing in and are hereby, on their own request, transferred to at This is so recorded as of the above date.

"I may state, Pastor, that I issue this letter of transfer only because I do not want to injure the souls of a very fine Christian family. I deplore the attitude of the Missouri Synod, and the total unfairness of it all, in that you readily receive letters of transfer issued by us but curtly refuse similar letters when requested by us. I have had that occasion arise several times. To me it is tremendously Pharisaical."

P. H. B.

The Peril of Power!

Brethren, there is peril in power.... Even in the field of religion, in the Church of God on earth, power needs to be assumed, and exercised, with fear and trembling. It is safe only in the hands of enlightened and wholly consecrated persons.... Many of the controversies in the Church, many of the schisms which have torn the Church, the body of Christ, asunder, have raged around those whose minds were inflated, and their souls intoxicated, by the possession of power, and the lust for more.... A man starts out with promise. He gives his best. His work is blessed. Then he forgets God's supreme part in the work. His head is turned. He becomes an egoist, a seeker of place, power, reward. And then his real usefulness in God's Kingdom is at an end, although he may still think he is doing wonders.—Golladay, *Thomasius Gospel*, p. 310.

Acceptance of the St. Louis Union Articles of 1938

Must Be Rescinded